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The Way and the Goal

Expressions of Devotion in the Early Śrī Vaiṣṇava Tradition

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Dedicated with affection and gratitude
to my parents,
Sri V.R. Rajagopalan and Srimati Hema Rajagopalan,
and to my husband,
Ranga Narayanan

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Introduction

The wave of devotion (*bhakti*[1]) that began in South India around the seventh century C.E. continued with intensity and influenced the religious patterns that emerged in medieval northern India. The Tamil devotees who sang in praise of Viṣṇu were called Āḻvārs, and the Śaivite saints were known as the Nāyaṉmārs. The Vaiṣṇava manifestation of *bhakti* included ecstatic and ritual surrender to the Lord, sustained meditation on his divine attributes, service to the deity and other devotees, and singing the glory and majesty of the divine name. This *bhakti* was transmitted through the Sanskrit text known as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the teacher Rāmānanda (circa 1360–1470), as well as through Sanskrit hymns (*stotras*) and oral tradition, and appeared in different forms in the teachings of Caitanya, Vallabha, Sūrdās, Kabīr, and Guru Nānak.

This book is a historical study of *bhakti* as seen in the literature composed during the formative years of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition in South India (circa seventh to late twelfth centuries C.E.).[2] It explores the expressions of devotion in the poetry of the Āḻvārs and in the writings of the teachers (*ācāryas*) who accepted the Āḻvār poetry as revelation. The *ācāryas* wrote about the importance of the discipline of *bhakti-yoga,* and in their prayers they surrendered themselves to the Lord and sought his grace. This surrender, called *prapatti* in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, was considered synonymous with *śaraṇāgati* ("coming for refuge").[3] This book is an essay on the passion of devotion and the quest for divine compassion.

The Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have used the word *bhakti* in two ways. First, they use it to refer to *bhakti-yoga,* a discipline closely linked with the paths of action and knowledge (*karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*), a discipline restricted to the upper three classes and involving a study of the *Vedas,* performance of enjoined rituals, and intense meditation. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* also use the word *bhakti* to indicate the deep love and affection any person may have for the Lord. Although Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* tend to take for granted this distinction between *bhakti-yoga* and "affection-*bhakti,*" some teachers, like Vedānta Deśika in the thirteenth century, clearly articulate the difference:

> [In this context] *bhakti* does not signify *bhakti-yoga,* but intense love (*prema*) toward the Lord. Intensity of *bhakti* means a state of mind in which the person will cease to exist if he cannot reach [the Lord] quickly. Though this is *not* the *bhakti-yoga* enjoined for some of the qualified ones, yet, some get this state of mind by the favor (*prasāda*) of the Lord due to some virtuous acts. . . . The person who has this state is also qualified for *prapatti*.[4]

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Our study on the expressions of devotion in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community will include discussions on *bhakti* (love), *bhakti-yoga* (the meditational discipline that is accompanied by love), and *prapatti* (surrender to the Lord). While the Āḻvārs and *ācāryas* clearly saw devotion as a *way* to reach the Lord, in time this devotion itself became a *goal*. The *ācāryas* also use the words "way" and "goal" in another sense: through the act of surrender, the devotee accepts the *Lord himself* to be the way (*upāya*) and the goal (*upeya*). This book explores how both devotion and the Lord are understood to be the way and the goal by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.[5]

The Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition venerated the Tamil poems of the Āḻvārs ("those who are immersed in love of God") as revealed literature and thought them equal to the Sanskrit *Vedas*. Because the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas accepted a twofold heritage, their philosophy is called Ubhaya-vedānta, or "dual Vedānta." The literature of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas is informed by the poems of the Āḻvārs, the myths of the Sanskrit epics and *Purāṇas*, and the sectarian Sanskrit literature of the *Pāñcarātra* tradition.[6]

The Śrī Vaiṣṇavas accept Nāthamuni (tenth century C.E.) as their first teacher (*ācārya*) and believe that he incorporated the Āḻvār songs into the daily liturgy of the community. Rāmānuja (traditional dates: 1017–1137 C.E.[7]), the fifth and most important teacher of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, emphasized in his longer writings the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* as the way to liberation (*mokṣ-opāya*), but in his devotional poems he professed that he had no *bhakti* and then sought refuge (*prapatti*) in the Lord.

Less than two hundred years after Rāmānuja, two important *ācāryas*—Naṭātūr Ammāḷ and Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai—disagreed on the nature of the way (*upāya*) to liberation. Their differences were crystallized one generation later in the writings of Vedānta Deśika (b. 1268) and Piḷḷai Lōkācārya (b. 1264). Deśika accepted *prapatti* and *bhakti-yoga* as "alternative ways" to liberation while Piḷḷai Lōkācārya accepted only a form of *prapatti*. The *ācāryas* disagreed on the meaning of *prapatti*. The theological differences between Deśika and Piḷḷai Lōkācārya eventually led to a social split of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community into the Vaṭakalai ("northern culture") and Teṅkalai ("southern culture") sects.[8]

The change in the understanding of the way (*upāya*) between the time of Rāmānuja and the later *ācāryas* can be put into perspective only after a study of the immediate disciples of Rāmānuja and the Tamil poetry of the Āḻvārs, which is the common heritage they all draw from.[9] A study of the works of Rāmānuja's disciples reveals connections with the works of the Āḻvārs, the places where the disciples agreed and differed with their teacher, and the initial discussion of the issues that divided the community in later centuries.

This book explores the continuity in sentiment and style found in the literature of the Āḻvārs and the early *ācāryas*. The first chapter focuses on the devotional poetry of the Āḻvārs. This is followed by discussions on Yāmuna, the

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first teacher whose works are extant, and then Rāmānuja, the most celebrated *ācārya* of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. We shall study the rich literature left by Rāmānuja's associates and see a variety of images, metaphors, and ideas. These were selectively emphasized by Deśika and Piḷḷai Lōkācārya in the thirteenth century, thus leading to diverging positions in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition.

I have chosen to focus on three associates of Rāmānuja: Kūrattāḻvāṉ (his scribe and disciple), Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ (Rāmānuja's cousin), and Parāśara Bhaṭṭar (Kūrattāḻvāṉ's son). Their expressions of devotion are each discussed in separate chapters. Rāmānuja had other close disciples, but they did not write any works directly relevant to the topic at hand.[10] A study of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, Piḷḷāṉ, and Bhaṭṭar gives us the opportunity to look at different genres of literature: we have the Sanskrit hymns (*stotras*) of Kūrattāḻvāṉ and his son Bhaṭṭar, the commentary on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* written by Piḷḷāṉ in a hybrid language of Sanskrit and Tamil, and the Sanskrit commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* written by Parāśara Bhaṭṭar. This book ends with Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, the last of the great *ācāryas* who knew Rāmānuja directly.

An examination of devotion and piety, this book is based primarily on the literature of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. The starting point of the study could have been the *Vedas* or the *Upaniṣads*, which are the Sanskrit texts of highest authority, or else the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, and epics, which would be the first generation of literature actively promoting *bhakti*. All these texts are very important to the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, but I have chosen to follow the other stream in the confluence and make the Tamil poems of the Āḻvārs the starting point of this book. This is because of my concern to show the importance of Tamil literature in the Ubhaya-vedānta of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. A discussion of the poetry of the Āḻvārs will facilitate the study of the connections and differences between their works and the devotion seen in later Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature.

We may also note that there is a relative paucity of literature on some of the Āḻvārs. While *bhakti* in the Sanskrit tradition has been studied carefully, Western scholars have only recently begun to focus on the Āḻvār literature,[11] and here again the Āḻvārs have received uneven treatment. Nammāḻvār, Periyāḻvār, and Āṇṭāḷ have attracted considerable attention, but Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār has hardly been studied, although he composed more than a quarter of all Āḻvār poetry. Because there are few available translations of the Āḻvār poetry and the writings of Rāmānuja's disciples, I have translated them extensively in this book.

In their Tamil songs the Āḻvārs reveal their ardent devotion to Viṣṇu. They rejoice in worshiping and serving the Lord in temples and they long for unions, implore divine grace, and recount the salvific acts of Viṣṇu during his incarnations. We see a territorial theology that becomes characteristic of Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotion: the Āḻvārs often celebrate the supreme Lord enshrined in the local temple. Some of the Āḻvārs act out roles in the myths of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, two of the most popular incarnations of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is addressed as a father,

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a beloved, a master, a lover or a child. The Āḻvārs surrender themselves to the Lord as his beloved and as his servant.

In the writings of the teachers (*ācāryas*), starting with the tenth century C.E., we no longer find the devotees enacting roles from the myths. However, the emotional confessions of worthlessness that the Āḻvārs professed are retained in the Sanskrit prayers (*stotras*) of the *ācāryas*. Many of the sentiments the Āḻvārs expressed come through in the Sanskrit *stotras*. The *ācāryas* understand that the Sanskrit text *Bhagavad-gītā* prescribes the path of devotion as a way to reach the Lord, but this devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) is thought to be an arduous discipline, one to be undertaken only by those who are born in the upper three classes of Hindu society and who have the authority to study the Sanskrit *Vedas*. What is interesting about this interpretation of *bhakti-yoga* is that all the teachers believe they are incompetent to practice it and say their only hope of salvation is to seek the Lord as a refuge. And so, while *bhakti-yoga* is presented as an important way to salvation, Nāthamuni, the very *first* teacher of the community, is in fact portrayed as the *last* Śrī Vaiṣṇava teacher to practice it. Instead of *bhakti-yoga*, we see a growing importance given to alternative means of seeking divine grace: These include folding one's hands in worship, singing the divine names, surrendering to the Lord, and petitioning him for divine compassion.

In this study of devotion we witness the transition from the Tamil poetry of the Āḻvārs to the commentaries, theological treatises, and Sanskrit *stotras* of the *ācāryas*, who saw themselves as a community at the confluence (*saṅgam*) of the Sanskrit and Tamil streams of literatures. (Hindus refer to the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā as the *saṅgam*, or meeting place, and believe that the two rivers are joined by a third, the Sarasvatī, which flows underground and whose path is not easily discernible.) In the surging confluence of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, we see two strikingly visible rivers: the Āḻvār poetry on one side, and the Sanskrit literature of the *Vedānta*, the epics, the *Purāṇas*, and the *dharma-śāstras* on the other. These two rivers are joined by a third, whose path is not clearly visible to us but which makes its presence increasingly felt with every succeeding generation: the *Pāñcarātra* texts. Regrettably, this stream in the confluence has for the most part remained underground in this study.

The claim that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition makes to being the inheritor of the Sanskrit and Tamil *Vedas* has been seriously challenged in various ways by Robert Lester and Friedhelm Hardy. In his works, Dr. Lester has argued that the Vedic orthodoxy of Rāmānuja was overshadowed by the increasing dominance of Tamil hymns and *Pāñcarātra* rites in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.[12] In his last essay on the subject, he says that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community "adopts" Rāmānuja; that is, the sectarian community of devotees who accepted the *Pāñcarātra* tradition and the Tamil hymns of the Āḻvārs portrayed Rāmānuja as a member of their community, adopting him, as it were, to gain respectability and acceptance from other orthodox communities.[13]

Dr. Hardy arrives at a very different conclusion. He finds the emotional *bhakti* of the Āḻvārs to have faded from the awareness of later Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

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He also finds that behind the facade of the Ubhaya-vedānta, the pressures of normative ideology (which he sees as synonymous with Vedānta and with Upaniṣadic spirituality[14]) remove what its anti-emotional premises could not tolerate as a second norm—emotionalism.[15] Hardy believes that the pressures of normative ideology (i.e., Vedānta and *Upaniṣads*) suppress the emotionalism of the Āḻvārs in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. He says that while the emotionalism faded out of Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature, it did continue "in an area of Southern Vaiṣṇavism which in the eyes of the early *ācāryas* was anathema: in a theistic, Vaiṣṇava form of Advaita-vedānta, or more precisely in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*."[16] And so while Dr. Hardy sees the "normative ideology" of the Sanskrit Vedānta becoming dominant in Śrī Vaiṣṇavism and wiping out the emotionalism of the Āḻvārs, Dr. Lester sees the sectarian influences (in which the Āḻvār poetry has a significant place) as taking over the tradition and suppressing the orthodox Vedāntic tradition.

Both positions question the community's perception of itself as remaining faithful both to the hymns of the Āḻvārs and the Sanskrit Vedānta. I have discussed the claims of these scholars in some detail, showing where I differ from their positions by highlighting the continuity of Āḻvār language and sentiment in the Sanskrit *stotra* tradition (which includes Rāmānuja's *Gadyas*) and by emphasizing the close connections between the works of Rāmānuja and those of his associates.[17] However, while the traditional Śrī Vaiṣṇava position sees only continuity and parallels between the Āḻvārs and the *ācāryas*, I note the distinctive features and the unique contribution of each theologian, as well as the importance of the different genres of literature through which they choose to convey their messages. It is in this Ubhaya-vedānta literature that we can see the special characteristics of Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotion and piety.

The intense *bhakti* of the South spread to northern India and became a dominant feature of medieval religion there.[18] The Vaiṣṇava forms of *bhakti* were disseminated primarily through the teacher Rāmānanda,[19] a person of seminal importance in the history of Indian religion, and the Sanskrit *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and are seen later in the writings of several religious teachers. Friedhelm Hardy has described the passage of South Indian *bhakti* into the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and has shown Mādhavendra Purī to be an important link between South Indian *bhakti* and Bengali Vaiṣṇavism.[20] John Hawley has recognized the influence of the Āḻvār poetry in the verses of Sūrdās.[21] And B. Kakati has explored the similarities between Śrī Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* and the *bhakti* tradition initiated by Śaṅkaradeva, the Assamese reformer.[22] Several studies see South Indian *bhakti* as a dominant background influence for the Sikh tradition founded by Guru Nānak,[23] and the importance of Rāmānuja and the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* tradition is also seen in the Swami Nārāyaṇa tradition of Gujarat.[24]

It is hoped that this essay on *bhakti* and *prapatti* in the formative years of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community will further our understanding of phenomena that have become characteristic of Hinduism as a whole: the importance of the Purāṇic and epic myths; the various manifestations and salvific acts of Viṣṇu; and the

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practices of addressing the Lord as a beloved, a master, and a child, singing his name and worshiping him in a temple, surrendering oneself to the deity and an *ācārya,* and serving the Lord and his devotees. We look at a time when the paths of *jñāna,* tantric practices, meditation, and *yoga* are all competing for popular attention, and while all of them are retained in varying measures in the several traditions, *bhakti* becomes the dominant and perhaps most visible aspect of Hinduism.

A study of the Āḻvārs and early *ācāryas* also provides the clues to comprehend why Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology developed in two distinct ways in the thirteenth century. While recognizing the differences in the understanding of *bhakti* and *prapatti* that exist between each author and between every generation of *ācāryas,* we hope to highlight the continuity and similarity in the works of the early Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotees, thereby showing their commitment to the notion of Ubhaya-vedānta.

To study the expressions of devotion in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community is to learn more about an important era in the history of the Hindu tradition. It is to learn more about one tradition's articulation of the relationships perceived between human beings and the Lord, to learn more about a community's struggle to reconcile the voice of scripture and the authority of experience. It is to learn more about human expressions of faith in divine grace.

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1

The Devotion of the Āḻvārs

In every Śrī Vaiṣṇava temple, the temple priest briefly places on the devotee's head a little silver crown representing the feet of Viṣṇu, and through this ritual the Lord's grace is bestowed on the devotee. Significantly enough, this symbol of the Lord's feet is called *śaṭhāri,* a name of Nammāḻvār, whom the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community considers the foremost devotee of Viṣṇu.[1] Nammāḻvār's verses portray his intense desire to abide permanently at the feet of Viṣṇu, and the *Tiruvāymoḻi* indicates that his desire was fulfilled.[2] In its own way, this little ritual articulates the key elements of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava understanding of *bhakti* and *prapatti:* the devotee worships in a temple where the Lord has incarnated himself and where he graciously abides; there is an emphasis on divine grace; the Lord's feet are regarded as the refuge of all human beings; the grace is seen to be mediated by Nammāḻvār, who is revered as the spiritual teacher of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community; and there is an apparent equality of each devotee on whose head the *śaṭhāri* is laid.

The *bhakti* movement, which has aptly been described as "a great, many-sided shift [that] occurred in Hindu culture and sensibility,"[3] began in South India around the sixth century C.E. Several saints traveled from temple to temple singing in praise of Viṣṇu or Śiva. The twelve canonized devotees of Viṣṇu were called the Āḻvārs,[4] and the sixty-three devotees of Śiva were known as Nāyaṇmārs. For the first time within Hinduism, devotion was expressed in a mother tongue, a "language . . . continuous with the language of one's earliest childhood and family, one's local folk and folklore."[5] Unlike Sanskrit, it was the native language, the mother tongue of the poets, a language associated with powerful emotions.

The twelve Āḻvārs—Poykai, Pēy, Pūtat, Tirumaḻicai, Kulacēkara, Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi, Tiruppāṉ, Periyāḻvār, Āṇṭāḷ, Tirumaṅkai, Nammāḻvār, and Maturakavi Āḻvār—probably lived between the sixth and the tenth centuries C.E.[6] Their poems are collectively called the *Nālāyira Divya-prabandham,* or *Sacred Anthology of Four Thousand Verses.* The poems of the Āḻvārs, as we have them today, are not usually arranged in chronological order according to when they were composed. Rather, they are arranged as follows:[7]

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Author	Work
FIRST THOUSAND	
1. Periyāḻvār	*Tiruppallāṇṭu*
2. Periyāḻvār	*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi*
3. Āṇṭāḷ	*Tiruppāvai*
4. Āṇṭāḷ	*Nācciyār Tirumoḻi*
5. Kulacēkara	*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi*
6. Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār	*Tiruccanta-viruttam*
7. Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār	*Tirumālai*
8. Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār	*Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci*
9. Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār	*Amalaṇātipirāṇ*
10. Maturakavi Āḻvār	*Kaṇṇinuṇ Ciṛuttāmpu*
SECOND THOUSAND	
11. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār	*Periya Tirumoḻi*
12. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār	*Tirukkuṛuntāṇṭakam*
13. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār	*Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*
THIRD THOUSAND	
14. Poykai Āḻvār	*Mutal Tiruvantāti*
15. Pūtat Āḻvār	*Iraṇṭām Tiruvantāti*
16. Pēy Āḻvār	*Mūṉṛām Tiruvantāti*
17. Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār	*Nāṉmukaṉ Tiruvantāti*
18. Nammāḻvār	*Tiruviruttam*
19. Nammāḻvār	*Tiruvāciriyam*
20. Nammāḻvār	*Periya Tiruvantāti*
21. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār	*Tiruveḻukūṛṛirukkai*
22. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār	*Ciṛiya Tirumaṭal*
23. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār	*Periya Tirumaṭal*
FOURTH THOUSAND	
24. Nammāḻvār	*Tiruvāymoḻi*
25. Tiruvaraṅkattu Amutaṉār	*Irāmānuca Nūṛṛantāti*[8]

In our consideration of the Āḻvārs' devotion, we shall first note the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community's understanding of the poems to be *revealed* literature as authoritative as the *Vedas*. We shall then discuss the Sanskrit and Tamil works that form the background to the Āḻvārs' hymns. The bulk of this chapter will be divided into three sections. In the first section we shall focus on Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, whom the Āḻvārs glorify. Here we shall note the Āḻvārs' proclamation of his superiority, the divine consorts, the paradox of the divine nature, the manifestations and salvific acts of Viṣṇu, the special importance of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, unique incidents associated with Rāma that are mentioned by the Āḻvārs, and the concept of the Lord as a child. In the second major section of this chapter we shall turn our attention to an important feature of the Āḻvār hymns:

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the *territorial* theology. Here we shall discuss the links between the deity enshrined in the temple, the *avatāra*, and the Lord's presence in the devotee's heart. The Āḻvārs surrender themselves to the Lord in a temple, and we shall see how the devotee realizes the infinite domain of the Lord in the local landscape. The third section deals with particular modes by which devotion is expressed: the Lord is perceived as a beloved, and several passionate songs are written in the anguish of separation. In this section we also note songs of fulfillment and union. Worshiping the Lord, singing his divine names, and serving him and his devotees are seen as important manifestations of the Āḻvārs' devotion. The chapter ends with a consideration of those terms in Āḻvār poetry that Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologians later interpreted as references to the discipline of *bhakti-yoga*.

The Revealed Nature of the Poems

It is clear that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community regards the Tamil works of the Āḻvārs as equivalent to the Sanskrit *Vedas*. The thirteenth century theologian Vedānta Deśika says:

> We clearly understand the unclear *Vedas* from the songs of joy that were woven like beautiful Tamil garlands by Poykai [and all the other Āḻvārs]. Through them, the *Vedas* are made manifest all through the world.
> In the form of Parāṅkuśa, Parakāla [i.e., Nammāḻvār and Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār] and others, the Lord made ten new incarnations. Like clouds gathering moisture from the ocean and pouring it down as rain for the welfare of all, the essential parts of the meaning of the *Vedas* were gathered and given to all in a language which everyone was qualified to understand.[9]

According to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, the songs of the Āḻvārs are revealed in two ways: initially by Viṣṇu through the twelve Āḻvārs, and later, after the songs were apparently forgotten, by Nammāḻvār to Nāthamuni, the first Śrī Vaiṣṇava teacher (*ācārya*).[10] Śrī Vaiṣṇava hagiography states that Nāthamuni instituted the recitation of the Āḻvār poems in temples and homes. Selections from *The Four Thousand* are chanted at weddings, funerals, ancestral rites and daily worship at home. The idea that these verses are equivalent to the *Vedas* is reinforced through Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature and ritual, and during worship the Śrī Vaiṣṇava switches from Tamil to Sanskrit frequently.

While all the works of *The Sacred Four Thousand* are considered sacred and the term *Veda* is applied to them collectively,[11] the *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇṭāḷ[12] and the *Tiruvāymoḻi* (henceforth abbreviated *Tvm*) of Nammāḻvār are of particular importance. The *Tvm* is referred to as *The Veda* or *The Upaniṣad* more often

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than any other work.[13] The Āḻvārs never compared their own works to the *Vedas*. Chronologically, the earliest statement to this effect comes from Maturakavi Āḻvār, the disciple of Nammāḻvār. Maturakavi is the only Āḻvār who wrote exclusively in praise of his human teacher and not Viṣṇu. In his brief poem "The Short Knotted String" (*Kaṇṇinuṇ Ciṛuttāmpu*), he says:

> He [Nammāḻvār] proclaimed the meaning of the *Vedas*, which are so difficult to understand. . . .
> He sang the inner meaning of the *Vedas* in such a way that they became firmly established in my mind.
>
> (*Kaṇṇinuṇ Ciṛuttāmpu* 8–9)

Later *ācāryas* called the *Tvm* the Draviḍa, or Tamil *Veda*, and considered its author, Nammāḻvār, to be the most important of all the Āḻvārs. The *ācāryas* formally take refuge in Nammāḻvār before they commence their works,[14] and Maṇavāḷa Māmuni, a fourteenth-century *ācārya*, also calls him the "foremost among those who have surrendered [to the Lord] (*prapanna-jana-kūṭastha*)."[15] Nammāḻvār is also the first historical figure to be revered in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava line of teachers.[16] In light of the importance given to both the *Tvm* and its composer, Nammāḻvār, we shall pay special attention to them in the course of this chapter.

The Sanskrit and Tamil Heritages

Respect for the Vedas

From their hymns, we can see that some of the Āḻvārs are deeply conscious of Sanskrit literature. All the Āḻvārs mention myths from the epics and *Purāṇas*, but, as we shall note later, the Āḻvārs were also aware of episodes not found in the early Sanskrit versions of the stories. The Āḻvārs speak of the *Vedas* with great respect, and there is absolutely no evidence that they rejected or criticized the medium (the language) or the message of Sanskrit literature. Periyāḻvār says he is well versed in the *Vedas* and worships the Lord with the chanting of the *Ṛg*, *Yajus*, and *Sāma Vedas* (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 5.1.6). He also praises sacred places by lauding the number of people who chant the *Vedas* in their precincts.[17] Further, he sees the Lord as the meaning of the *Vedas* ("the divine light of the meaning of Vedānta": *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.3.11) and also addresses him by the epithets Cantōkaṉ, Taittiriyan, Cāmavēti (Sanskrit: Chandoga, Taittirīya, Sāma-vedī), as well as the "Pauḻiyaṉ,"[18] (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 5.5.9, 7.7.2). While the Āḻvārs were deeply influenced by classical Tamil poems, we cannot ignore their respect for the *Vedas* and other Sanskrit literature. Indeed, their works are as much a product of the literature of two

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languages as are the later Śrī Vaiṣṇava works that proclaim the "dual Vedānta" (Ubhaya-vedānta).[19]

The Pāñcarātra Influence

The respect that the Āḻvārs had for the *Vedas* can be documented, and their awareness of the myths found in the epics and *Purāṇas* is apparent. The nature and extent of their knowledge of the *Pāñcarātra* literature, however, is complicated and has not been much studied. *Pāñcarātra* is the name given to the tradition based on those sections of *āgama* scriptures devoted to Lord Nārāyaṇa. The origin of the name is disputed; the texts deal with theology, forms of worship and rituals. Many Śrī Vaiṣṇava temples use these texts as authorities for liturgy.[20] The *Mahābhārata* also shows traces of *Pāñcarātra* influence.[21] In summary, it is difficult to verify the lines of access the Āḻvārs may have had to the *Pāñcarātra* tradition and to categorically state whether their knowledge was direct or indirect.

The worship of Viṣṇu in a temple, primarily a *Pāñcarātra* notion, is a central feature of the Āḻvārs' *bhakti*, as are exhortations to offer flowers, sandalwood paste, and incense to him. Since *Pāñcarātra* practices were and still are an integral part of temple rituals, I would suggest that it is from this angle that we should begin to understand the liturgical milieu that the Āḻvārs lived in.[22]

Periyāḻvār, Tirumaḻicai, and Nammāḻvār also refer to the "three forms" or the "four forms" of Viṣṇu.[23] In *Pāñcarātra* terminology, the "four forms" are Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, but the Āḻvārs do not use these names. The *Pāñcarātra* also gives the names of twelve emanations: Keśava, Nārāyaṇa, Mādhava, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Madhusūdana, Trivikrama, Vāmana, Śrīdhara, Hṛṣīkeśa, Padmanābha, and Dāmodara.[24] Periyāḻvār mentions these twelve names in his *Tirumoḻi* (2.3.1–13), and Nammāḻvār weaves them into his *Tiruvāymoḻi* (2.7.1–13). The *Tirumoḻi* of Periyāḻvār and the *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḻvār consist of sets of eleven verses, but in sets where the twelve names are mentioned there are thirteen verses, one devoted to each name and the last indicating the happy consequences of chanting them.

Some of the Āḻvārs were familiar with the "sacred eight syllables" (Skt. *aṣṭākṣara;* Tamil *tiruveṭṭu eḻuttu*, also known as the *tirumantra* in later Śrī Vaiṣṇavism). This *mantra*, as well as the rituals of "branding" the marks of the discus and conch on a devotee's shoulder blades or upper arms, is usually associated with the *Pāñcarātra* sect.[25] In later years, the giving of the *mantra* and the branding of the devotee's arms became a standard practice associated with the sacrament of *prapatti*.

There is one other area where we may possibly detect a *Pāñcarātra* influence, though this is not one allowed by traditional commentators. There are frequent references by Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār to "the five *vēḷvis*."[26] The following verse is a

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typical one and *inter alia* refers to worship with flowers and incense and the Lord's presence in a temple, concepts that are generally associated with a Pāñcarātric origin:

> The Lord [reclines] on the snake
> with a spreading hood,
> and the immortal ones worship him
> with sandalwood paste, incense, lamps,
> and bunches of fragrant flowering *tuḻai*.
> Here he is served
> by the Lady of the Flower
> and the Damsel of the Earth,
> whose soft breasts
> are adorned with sandalwood paste.
> I saw him
> in the Sacred Town of the Cowherd,
> the one treasure,
> twice daily.
> He, who I think [is]
> the three fires,
> the four *Vedas*,
> *the five sacrifices*,
> the six limbs of the *Vedas*,
> the seven notes of a melody.
>
> (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 2.10.1)

The Tamil word *vēḷvi* means "sacrifice,"[27] and the Āḻvārs use it in phrases like "the other day, at the *vēḷvi* of Mahābali,"[28] a context in which the word can only mean "sacrifice." Modern commentators construe "the five kinds of *vēḷvi*" to mean "the five great sacrifices" (*pañca-mahā-yajña*).[29] Rāmānuja refers to them,[30] and the *Manu-smṛti* (3.69–71) also speaks of the five great sacrifices.[31] One may speculate that the Āḻvār references allude to the five kinds of worship/sacrifice spoken of by the *Pāñcarātra* scriptures. In this connection, we may note that V. Rangacharya states that the name *Pāñcarātra* "can be . . . derived from the fact that the original adherents of the cult probably sacrificed five times a year or observed some vows according to five *rātras* or seasons."[32] The word *vēḷvi* may also mean "worship," and since the *pañca* in *Pāñcarātra* may be taken to refer to the *pañca-kāla* worship or even the *pañca-saṁskāra* (the five sacraments pertaining to *prapatti*)—there being no agreement on the subject[33]—it is possible to admit that "five *vēḷvis*" refers to the five rituals or sacrifices found in *Pāñcarātra* tradition.

Thus, on the basis of (a) the importance of temple worship for the Āḻvārs, (b) their familiarity with the four and twelve forms of Viṣṇu in his *vyūha* aspect, (c) the mention of *mantras* and rituals like branding the emblems of Viṣṇu

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on the shoulders of a devotee, and (d) possible references to "the five sacrifices/ worship," I feel that there was considerable knowledge of the *Pāñcarātra* practices among the Āḻvārs, but the exact nature and extent of this, however, is yet to be determined. I may add that one can fully appreciate the impact of the Āḻvār poetry only when the extent of the *Pāñcarātra* and *Vaikhānasa* influence is understood.[34]

The Tamil Tradition

The poems of the Āḻvārs reflect the literary conventions of earlier Tamil poems. Before the compositions of the Āḻvārs and Nāyaṉmārs, Tamil had a long history of sophisticated poems, grammar, and drama. While it is undeniable that even in the earliest Tamil composition extant (which is probably the original stratum of the *Tolkāppiyam*[35]) there are some similarities to Sanskrit literature, and that the early poems of love and war borrow many words from Sanskrit, Tamil literature is on the whole neither imitative of nor derived from early Sanskrit material. The oldest collections of Tamil poems, *The Eight Anthologies* (*Eṭṭutokai*) and *The Ten Songs* (*Pattupāṭṭu*), were probably composed between the first and third centuries C.E.

The earliest sections of *The Eight Anthologies* and *The Ten Songs* deal primarily with two themes: *akam* (romantic love) and *puṟam* (war, heroism, and chivalry). Lost for over a thousand years, these poems were rediscovered in the nineteenth century.[36] Unlike these secular poems of love and war, the later devotional hymns of the Āḻvārs and the Nāyaṉmārs have maintained an important place in the consciousness of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva communities and have been chanted, studied, enacted, and enjoyed without break for the last thousand years.

The poems of *The Eight Anthologies* and *The Ten Songs* that deal with love and war refer to five basic situations, which correspond to five landscape settings (*tiṇai*). The situations for *akam* are love-making, waiting anxiously for a beloved, separation, the patient waiting of a wife, and anger at the lover's infidelity. These are represented in poetry by landscapes which are mountainous (*kuṟiñci*), seaside (*neytal*), desert (*pālai*), pastoral (*mullai*), and agricultural (*marutam*).[37] Trees, flowers, birds, and even gods became part of a symbolic landscape in these poems, and each expressed a situation of love or war. A reference to the seashore, for example, meant that there was a separation between lovers. The jasmine flower indicated a woman's patient waiting, and the mountains symbolized a rapturous union. The audience understood the poem's implied meaning.

Religious literature began to flourish after the fifth century C.E. Several poems in the *Paripāṭal* (a work included in an anthology of early classical poetry but probably written later than most other poems in that collection) were addressed to Viṣṇu, and other hymns praised Murukaṉ.[38] The Āḻvārs and Nāy-

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aṉmārs who lived after the sixth century C.E. drew freely from their Tamil heritage and incorporated the symbols of the *akam* and *puṟam* poems into their works.[39] The Lord is seen as a lover and as a king, accessible and remote, gracious and grand. Through their songs of devotion, the Āḻvārs seek from Viṣṇu the embrace of a beloved and the protection of a king.

Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa

The Supremacy of Viṣṇu

Viṣṇu, whom the Āḻvārs more frequently call Nārāyaṇa or Nāraṇa, is regarded as the supreme deity, and Brahmā, Śiva, and all other celestial and human beings are seen as his devotees. I quote here from one set of songs from the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, but one can find similar sentiments in the poetry of all the Āḻvārs:

> People of this world!
> Say there is none but the Lord!
> Speak only of his excellence.
> The supreme one of Tirukkurukūr who, the other day,
> Created the many divine ones,
> the sprawling worlds and then,
> swallowed, hid, and spat them out.[A]*
>
> He then
> strode over[B] and bored through them.[C]
>
> The divine ones bow their heads to him.
>
> (*Tvm* 4.10.3)

The Āḻvārs speak of Śiva and Brahmā worshiping Viṣṇu's feet (*Tvm* 7.6.2) and of Viṣṇu dwelling within the two gods. Even the actions of redemption usually associated with Śiva are attributed to Viṣṇu; he is said to dwell in and control Śiva and Brahmā and is thus responsible for their salvific acts:

> Beyond the range of the divine ones' intelligence,
> He, the first one of the skies and everything thereon,
> Cause of the Creator, most supreme one, ate them all![A]
> He indwells; as Śiva and Brahmā,
> He burnt the triple cities,[D] enlightened the immortals;
> As them he destroys and then creates the worlds.
>
> (*Tvm* 1.1.8)

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* The small superior letters are references to the list of myths summarized in Appendix 2.

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When Mārkaṇṭēya sought his feet as refuge,[E]
The naked god* gave him life
through Nārāyaṇa's grace.
The supreme, primordial Lord stands in Tirukkurukūr,
where cranes perch
on fences of fragrant blossoms.
How can you talk of other gods?

(*Tvm* 4.10.8)

According to some of the Āḻvārs, Viṣṇu, as Śiva, destroys the three cities and gives life to Mārkaṇṭēya; as Brahmā he enunciates the *Vedas* and enlightens the immortal ones. He protects, creates, and destroys; he *is* Brahmā and Śiva (*Tvm* 8.4.9). That Viṣṇu also rescues other gods from trouble is an obvious testimony to his supremacy:

Lord of Śiva, Lord of Brahmā, he is the Lord of all.
Look: He freed Śiva from the skull stuck on his hand.[F]
This Lord stands in Tirukkurukūr
Surrounded by radiant, majestic towers.

Why should the followers of the *Liṅga* [*Purāṇa*]
Speak ill of him?

(*Tvm* 4.10.4)

The conviction of the Āḻvārs that Viṣṇu is the only supreme deity leads them to condemn other religious positions. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār refers to Buddhists and Jains as "ignorant" (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 9.8.9); Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār asserts that those who know the sacred books would not stoop so low as to hear Buddhist or Jain doctrines, which "teach false *dharma*" (*Tirumālai* 7). Nammāḻvār's position is that since Viṣṇu *is* everything and everyone, he alone is worthy of worship:

He became and exists [as]
you, the devotees of the *Liṅga Purāṇa*,
you, the Jains, Buddhists, you crafty debaters,
and your various gods.
This is no falsehood.

This Lord flourishes in Tirukkurukūr,
which is filled with swaying fields of paddy.
Praise him!

(*Tvm* 4.10.5)

Viṣṇu is the supreme refuge (*Tvm* 3.6.8); one who clasps his feet is free of grief:

---

* a reference to Śiva

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The radiant one,
  infinitely blissful,
  infinitely handsome,
is captivated by the spell
  of the Lady of the Lotus.
My father is infinitely wise;
  with infinite wisdom he acts.
I clasped the feet of Kaṇṇā,[40]
  who is infinitely wonderful.

I am without grief.

(*Tvm* 3.10.8)

The supreme Viṣṇu is "captivated by the Lady of the Lotus," who is his consort. The Āḻvārs mention three consorts of the Lord.

The Divine Consorts

Although the Āḻvārs frequently mention the three consorts of Viṣṇu—Tiru (Śrī), Pār Makaḷ (the Lady of the Earth; Bhū in Sanskrit writings), and Nappiṉṉai[41]—none of the Āḻvār verses address them directly. This fact is significant, especially in light of Śrī's increased importance in later Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology.

While Tiru (Śrī), Pār Makaḷ (Earth), and Nappiṉṉai are mentioned, Tiru seems to be the primary consort. The Āḻvārs address Viṣṇu as Tirumāl and as one who bears the "Lady of the Flower" (Śrī is portrayed as being on a lotus blossom) on his chest.[42] Poykai Āḻvār calls Tiru "the Auspicious Lady":

On the foaming ocean of milk,
where the soft spray falls,
He lies with the Auspicious Lady,
the Lady of the Earth, and the cowherd girl;
And yet his mind is ever with the auspicious one.
  What wonder is this?

(*Mutal Tiruvantāti* 42)

Tiru's grace is sometimes mentioned in conjunction with the Lord's grace; Nammāḻvār seeks both the grace of the Lord and that of the Lady of the Lotus (*Tvm* 9.2.1), and he says that she is inseparable from the Lord; but there is no poem of the Āḻvārs' directly addressing her, nor is she said to personify grace. The closest we come to the notion of Tiru embodying mercy is in a verse by Periyāḻvār, where he says, "*Even if* (*ākilum*) the Lady of the Lotus complains about his servant, [my Lord] will exclaim, 'My servant would not do thus; but even if he did, why, he did well!'" (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.9.2).

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The Paradox of Divine Nature

Viṣṇu is transcendent and immanent; he has a divine, auspicious form and yet is beyond thought. He encompasses all paradoxes and yet is as close as the nearest temple. Supreme and accessible, he rules from heaven and wanders and abides on earth.

Several times the Āḻvārs mention the all-pervasive nature of Viṣṇu. He is in everything, and everything is in him; he is diffused through the universe like "life in a body," and yet he also encompasses everything by swallowing the entire universe:[43]

> Becoming all things,
> Spread on open space, fire,
> wind, water, and earth,
> He is diffused through them all.
> Hidden, he pervades,
> like life in a body.
> The radiant scripture speaks
> of the divine one who ate all this.^
>
> (*Tvm* 1.1.7)

> O wondrous one who was born!
> O wondrous one who fought the Bhārata war!
> O great one who became all things,
> starting with the primal elements—
> wind, fire, water, sky, and earth.
>
> O great one, wondrous one,
> You are in all things,
> like butter hidden in fresh milk.
> You stand in all things
> and yet transcend them.
>
> Where can I see you?
>
> (*Tvm* 8.5.10)

Viṣṇu is seen as a personal deity with a handsome form, victorious weapons, etc. Nammāḻvār compares the effulgence of the Lord's body to molten gold, and his eyes, feet, and hands to the lotus blossom (*Tvm* 2.5.2–3). Tiruppāṇ Āḻvār's only poem in the canon, called "The Pure Primordial Lord" (*Amalaṉ-ātipirāṉ*), is a detailed description of Viṣṇu enshrined in Śrī-raṅgam. The poem describes every part of the Lord's body, starting with the divine feet and proceeding to his head (*Amalaṉātipirāṉ* 1–11).

And yet this Lord also transcends all thought. Consider the following poem of Nammāḻvār:

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If you say he exists, he does:
his forms are these forms.
If you say he does not,
his formlessness
is of these non-forms.

If he has the qualities
of existence and non-existence,
he is in two states,
he who pervades without end.

(*Tvm* 1.1.9)

Contrasting the forms of the Lord in the temple with his formlessness, Nammāḻvār sings:

My mind can't grasp
how you stood, sat, and reclined.
I stand contemplating the wonders
of your having many and no forms.
Tell me,
O radiant one who ate the worlds,^
How am I to think of you?

(*Tvm* 5.10.6)

He encompasses all paradoxes, and yet he is as close as the nearest temple:

Being
virtue and sin,
union and separation,

Being
all of these,

Being
memory and forgetfulness,
existence and non-existence,

Being none of these,

The Lord resides
in the Sacred Celestial City
that is surrounded by lofty mansions.

See the sweet grace of Kaṇṇā.
Is this false?

(*Tvm* 6.3.4)

This Lord who transcends all dualities is the refuge of all human beings:

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Being
of a supremely brilliant form,
and having a body encrusted with filth,

Hidden and manifest,
Standing erect and doing crooked deeds,

The Lord resides in the Sacred Celestial City.
The celestial ones bow their heads
To his feet, which fulfill all desires.

These feet are our sole refuge.

(*Tvm* 6.3.7)

The Lord is the mighty fortress (*araṇ*) and refuge of the Āḻvār (*Tvm* 9.1.3, 10.1.6–7; *Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.4.2 and 7; *Mutal Tiruvantāti* 60), but his feet are like tender and delicate lotus blossoms. Nammāḻvār says:

My Lord's feet
are soft lotus blossoms.
They are
our fortress.

(*Tvm* 10.1.6)

Besides expressing these paradoxes, the Āḻvārs delight in illustrating contrasts with mythological references. Viṣṇu killed one bird[G] yet rides on another, the eagle Garuḍa (*Tiruccanta-viruttam* 19). As Kṛṣṇa he subdued the snake Kāliya,[H] but in his supreme form he reclines on the serpent Ananta in the Ocean of Milk (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 3.5.11). He destroyed the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa[I] yet came to the rescue of the elephant Gajendra[J] (*Tiruccanta-viruttam* 40; *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.2.5, 5.1.8; *Ciṛiya Tirumaṭal* 35–36). As Kṛṣṇa he sucked the life out of Pūtanā's breasts[K] yet was nourished by the breasts of his foster mother, Yaśodā (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 2.2.8; *Mūṉṛām Tiruvantāti* 74; *Tiruccanta-viruttam* 36). Again as Kṛṣṇa, he stood under the Govardhana Mountain,[L] lifting it, but as an *arcā* he stands on top of the Vēṅkaṭa Mountain. Most important, as the man-lion Narasiṁha he tore the chest of the demon Hiraṇya[M] with his claws, but this Lord abides in the heart of the devotee Nammāḻvār:

I praise you,
ever thinking of you
in my inner heart.

O pure one who seize
and abide in my inner soul!

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Taking the form of a man-lion,
with your sharp claws
You split in two
the chest of the demon.[M]

(*Tvm* 9.4.7)

The appearance of Viṣṇu as a man-lion is only one of several manifestations he takes for the sake of his devotee.

The Manifestations and Salvific Acts of Viṣṇu

Many of the Āḻvār poems address both Viṣṇu enshrined in the temple and his incarnations. The Āḻvārs are very familiar with the mythology of the *Purāṇas* and the epics, and they also seem to have access to other traditions (possibly oral), from which they draw several stories. It is in the sustained and repeated remembrance of the salvific deeds of Viṣṇu and the various incidents associated with his incarnations that we see the true dimensions of the Āḻvārs' devotion. The supremacy of Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa and his coming down as Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, or his presence in the temple, proclaim his ability and desire to save all beings and destroy the evil that exists in the form of demons. According to the Āḻvārs, the promise of salvation is offered and divine grace is seen when Viṣṇu destroys Madhu and Kaitabha and rescues the *Vedas,*[N] kills Kaṁsa,[O] rushes to the help of the stricken elephant king Gajendra,[J] answers the call of Draupadī when she is being stripped of her garments and modesty,[P] or performs any other action that has potential salvific value. The Āḻvār verses do not merely retell a past deed. The salvation is *now,* in the very remembrance of the Lord's supremacy or compassion, which has given rise to the Āḻvārs' desire to see him in a temple, to sing the glories of his name, and to bow before him, worship him, and serve him, and which has also elicited their pleas for, or recognition of, his grace:

Praise the lotus-eyed Lord
. . . . . .
whose bow burnt beautiful Laṅkā,[Q]
the Lord, who destroys our sins.

(*Tvm* 3.6.2)

Thus the Āḻvārs proclaim their *bhakti* by repeatedly mentioning Viṣṇu's glorious deeds and totally involving themselves in these stories. It is in recognition of this involvement that I have appended lists of the primary myths found in *The Sacred Four Thousand*.

We must recognize that the frequent allusions to myths is not a unique feature of the Āḻvār poetry. Talking of the great Śaiva saint Māṇikkavācakar, Yocum notes:

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> When Māṇikkavācakar refers to various aspects of Śiva's character, he frequently does so by alluding to one or another of the pan-Indian myths about the god. Although the poet's use of such myths is extensive, it is also selective. . . . When Māṇikkavācakar cites one of the widely acknowledged incidents in Śiva's biography, he does so because it correlates closely with his personal experience of the deity. There is no idle retelling of the myths in this text. These myths are referred to because they illuminate some aspect of the god's character which Māṇikkavācakar knows first hand.[44]

The remembrance of the deeds and salvific actions Viṣṇu performs in his various manifestations seems to assure the Āḻvārs of the grace of the Lord; thus, after they mention a particular act of divine help they frequently rejoice in his grace or petition him to extend his grace to them:

> That day, he ate butter
> with his hand.[R]
> [Today,] without any falsehood,
> In truth, he mingled with me.
>
> Mingling with my soul,
> the Lord took it as well.
> Earlier, as a dwarf,
> with subdued senses,
> He took the earth.[B]
>
> He conquered the seven beasts,[S]
> He ate the seven worlds,[A]
> He created the beautiful heaven,
> He became my very thought.
>
> (*Tvm* 1.8.5–7)

In these three verses, the myths are closely related with the union between the poet and the Lord. The stories of Kṛṣṇa stealing butter, the dwarf taking the earth, Kṛṣṇa taming seven bulls, and Viṣṇu eating the worlds at the time of dissolution are all perceived as acts of grace consistent with the divine grace that initiated the union.

The story of Gajendra, the elephant king, is alluded to several times and serves as a paradigm for the grace that the Lord extends to the afflicted. Consider the following songs—one imploring divine grace and the other rejoicing in it:

> My father's house is good;

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O Lord who so quickly destroyed
the elephant's distress,
by bringing your lotus feet
to [its] head,

My father! I pray for the same [fate].

(*Tvm* 2.9.1)

He looked and stayed:
crushing my wild senses
that ruled my lowly heart,
He dwelt within it.

I do not think much now of
the grace of the mighty Lord,
who showered his grace
on the elephant with mighty legs.

(*Tvm* 8.7.2)

The Āḻvār seeks comfort from the myth of Gajendra and seeks the grace that the elephant received in the past. The Lord first destroyed the crocodile attacking Gajendra and then rescued his elephant-devotee. In the second verse quoted, the Āḻvār rejoices in the fact that the Lord has rescued him from his senses and now dwells within him. Contemplating this wondrous fact, Nammāḻvār says that even the grace Gajendra received seems insignificant in comparison.

One very important myth that Nammāḻvār integrates into his *bhakti* experience is that of the Lord devouring the worlds. Here the seemingly artless references to the myth in the earlier parts of the poem are actually indicative of a broader experience of the poet's union with the Lord, and the Lord's devouring of the worlds serves as a root metaphor for the entire poem.[45] Given the importance that the myths have in reflecting the Āḻvārs' *bhakti* and their confidence in the Lord's grace, I have fully translated them in the text of the poems.

The Āḻvārs frequently mention the various incarnations of Viṣṇu, but the lists differ. Tirumaṅkai mentions the descents as a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a lion-man, a dwarf (Vāmana), a man with an axe (Paraśurāma), Rāma, a swan, and Kṛṣṇa (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.4.1–10). But in an earlier set of verses, he lists a different set of ten incarnations; in later generations this list becomes the "official" one: the fish, tortoise, boar, lion, dwarf, Paraśurāma, Rāma, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Kalki (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 8.8.1–10). Periyāḻvār also mentions these ten incarnations:[46]

This is the temple of him who became
the divine fish, tortoise, boar, lion and dwarf.
He became Rāma in three forms, he became Kaṇṇā,
and as Kalki he will end [these worlds].

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This is Śrī-raṅgam, where the swan and its mate
swing on the lotus blossoms, embrace on flowery beds,
and revel in the red pollen strewn around the river.

(*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.9.9)

Apart from the ten incarnations mentioned above, also frequently mentioned are Viṣṇu's *avatāras* as a swan (Haṁsa: *Periya Tirumoḻi* 9.2.10, 9.4.2, 10.9.1, 11.4.9) and as a horse-headed person (Hayagrīva: *Periya Tirumoḻi* 4.5.6, 5.3.2, 7.8.2; and *Tvm* 2.8.5); both seem to appear at some point during the dissolution of the worlds. In many instances the Āḻvārs state the reasons for the Lord's descent: Nārāyaṇa comes for the welfare of the "fourteen worlds" (*Tiruccanta-viruttam* 79); to "remove the sorrow of the Earth-maiden and give her life" (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 8.8.9); and "to relieve the burden of this earth, he was born in Northern Maturai" as Kṛṣṇa (*Tvm* 9.1.10). Periyāḻvār states that he was born as "the son of Vasudeva to remove the suffering of the gods in heaven" (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 1.2.16). Nammāḻvār gives similar reasons and also makes it clear that this is the Lord who is in heaven and in the Ocean of Milk:

To kill Kaṁsa,° the oppressor of the good,
He, the first one of the *Vedas*,
left his primordial form of effulgence there
and was born here. . . .

Becoming human and everything else,
The unique one, wondrously born,
is the Lord who belongs to the deep sea.

(*Tvm* 3.5.5–6)

The *avatāra* is precipitated by an act of devotion and surrender:

To fulfill the intense desire of the gods who prayed,
You were born. . . .

(*Tvm* 6.4.5)

There was no higher ground;
Leaving not a spot uncovered,
the mighty flood swept high,
covering the prosperous lands
of the immortal ones.

The gods said:
We have no other refuge.
To be their fortress,
He, by his grace,
came as a fish.[r]

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The bowels [of the fish] shook in its haste,
the waves and waters of the ocean
crashed and rocked,
as he bore on his back
the mountains
that scraped the skies.

My heart, do not forget
to worship this Lord.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.4.1)

The grace by which the Lord is born in "the dirty lot of mankind" (*Tvm* 6.4.7) and the paradox of the supreme, mighty Lord performing his playful acts in his incarnations fascinate Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār:

My Lord,
As Nara and Nārāyaṇa, revealed
without restriction the books of ethics.

Let that be;

Look here, the other day
[at the time of dissolution]
he opened wide his mouth and throat
[to swallow] the flaring suns, the earth,
the foaming oceans, the mountains, and fires.[A]

And now
he has eaten the butter churned by the cowherd girls
and stands bound by the rope.[R]

Is there a greater marvel than this?

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 10.6.1)

Later, in a sustained meditation on the paradox of the Lord's supremacy and his accessibility in his incarnation, Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār speaks in a genre of verse called *cāḻal* in Tamil literature.[47] He casts the poems in the form of a conversation between two girls offering contrasting points of view, and each verse ends with the refrain *cāḻalē:*

Taunted by
all the people of this world
which is surrounded by the deep seas,
he ate the yogurt[R]
kept in Ayppati
by the girls with flowing hair.
Look, my friend!

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The golden stomach that ate the yogurt
kept by the girls with flowing hair
ate the seven worlds and then
had room to spare,[A]
Oh *cāḻalē*!

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.5.3)

Spanked by the cowherd lady with jet-black hair,
He was tied up by a short knotted rope.[R]
Look, my friend!
He was tied up by a short knotted rope, but still
He is beyond the noose of the celestials' thought.
Oh *cāḻalē*!

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.5.5)

The Incarnations as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa

Of the various incarnations of Viṣṇu, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa figure most prominently. The Āḻvārs praise all the *avatāras*, but only Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are addressed directly in a mythic situation, i.e., by a character in a story. While the Āḻvārs mention Kṛṣṇa several times and frequently relate incidents from his life, it would be quite misleading to call the Āḻvārs' devotionalism *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, as Hardy has,[48] or "Kṛṣṇaism." Periyāḻvār, whose songs in the first part of the *Tirumoḻi* depict an intense love for Kṛṣṇa, goes on to speak in the guise of Hanumān, Rāma's messenger to Sītā. The alternation between Rāma and Kṛṣṇa is sharply seen in one set of verses written by Periyāḻvār. The verses are in the form of a folk song that was sung while girls played a game resembling badminton.[49] The song alternately praises Rāma and then Kṛṣṇa, thus resembling the ball tossed from side to side, with each team singing the glories of one manifestation. The concluding verse, bearing the "signature" of the poet, is particularly telling for it reveals the equal regard he had for Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. He has sung equally about both of them, at least in that set of verses:

Those who recite these five songs plus five,
composed in pure Tamil by Viṣṇucittaṉ
of the Southern New Town,
In praise of Nanda's son and Kākutstha,[50]
(the songs of the glowing girls
flying in their game),
will obtain everything they desire.

(*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 3.9.11)

It must be noted that while Kṛṣṇa is mentioned in early Tamil literature com-

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posed between the first and fifth century C.E.,[51] the figure of Rāma, while known, does not seem to have been accorded much importance.[52] The importance of Kṛṣṇa in Āḻvār and pre-Āḻvār literature has been noted by Hardy and other scholars,[53] and in the following pages I shall show how the Āḻvārs participated in the story of Rāma.

Given the paucity of references to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in earlier classical Tamil poetry, the Āḻvārs' awareness of the story, as well as their detailed knowledge of the various incidents, is striking in itself. Even more important is the fact that they seem to have had access to another tradition, possibly oral, from which they drew their stories. We also see (for the first time in Tamil literature) poets actually participating in the story of Rāma by talking in the guise of various characters in the epic. Rāma is also the only character in Āḻvār poetry to whom the poets sing from the viewpoint of another male: Kulacēkara Āḻvār puts himself in the place of Daśaratha grieving over the departure of Rāma, while Tirumaṅkai actually identifies himself with the defeated *rākṣasas* of Laṅkā seeking Rāma's protection, and then he sings through their voices.[54]

We must note that the Āḻvārs do not show exclusive devotion to Rāma or Kṛṣṇa; as we have seen, both are regarded as two of the many manifestations of Viṣṇu. We shall discover later in this chapter that the Āḻvārs do not refrain from expressing parental or erotic sentiments towards Rāma. This is noteworthy because Kṛṣṇa is usually the focus of erotic and paternal emotions in later, North Indian poetry. We shall also note that the figure of Rāma is frequently identified with the Lord enshrined in the temples.

References to the Rāmāyaṇa in The Sacred Four Thousand

"There is no refuge other than Daśaratha's son."

(*Tvm* 3.6.8)

We can see the Āḻvārs' *bhakti* toward Rāma in two ways: through hundreds of allusions to Rāma, and through the Āḻvārs' participation in the story of Rāma by composing songs expressing their identification with the various characters in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The main references to the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* are given in Appendix 1. Not only were the Āḻvārs conversant with the incidents mentioned in the Sanskrit version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* attributed to Vālmīki, but they also allude to a few additional incidents. Similarly, Ate found that some of the stories about Kṛṣṇa from Periyāḻvār's *Tirumoḻi* are not seen in earlier Sanskrit works and seem to have originated in South India.[55] I have been able to identify four incidents connected with Rāma that are not seen in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The first of these incidents is mentioned by Poykai Āḻvār, Pēy Āḻvār, and Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār, who were, chronologically, the earliest Āḻvārs.[56] Let us consider two of these verses:[57]

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As a baby lying on the lap
of the four-faced one
who established the precious *Vedas,*
"Seven heads plus three"—thus the Lord counted
the heads of the wicked demon.
The Lord's feet are our refuge;
A mighty fortress is he,
who holds aloft the discus.

(*Mūṉṟām Tiruvantāti* 77–78)

Long ago as a baby
placed on [Brahmā's] lap,
He counted on his toes
the heads of that worthless demon.
This child dwells
on Vēṅkaṭa, the beautiful hill.

(*Nāṉmukaṉ Tiruvantāti* 44)

Evidently, the allusion is to Rāvaṇa, who in disguise seeks a boon from Brahmā; Viṣṇu, in the form of a baby, lies on Brahmā's lap and points to his ten toes, trying to warn Brahmā that it is Rāvaṇa who stands before him. The ten toes indicate the ten heads of Rāvaṇa. According to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava interpretation, Viṣṇu was trying to warn Brahmā against rashly giving boons to Rāvaṇa,[58] but the Āḻvār references do not make it clear whether Brahmā heeded the advice.

Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār mentions the story of a little squirrel that helped Rāma:

I am not like the little squirrel that,
as the monkeys shoved and heaved the mountains,
so spontaneously dipped itself in the water.
[With its wet fur] it rolled on the sand
and ran back into the waves of the sea,
Concentrating only on building the bridge.

But my heart is hard as the trees.
I grieve that
even my heart did not desire
to serve the Lord of Raṅgam.

(*Tirumālai* 27)

When the monkeys were helping Rāma build a bridge,[U] a little squirrel rolled on the sand, dipped in the sea, and climbed all about, trying to deposit the sand from his back into the water and thus help in the construction.

When Hanumān was sent as a messenger to Sītā,[V] he related several incidents to identify himself as an envoy of Rāma. In Periyāḻvār's *Tirumoḻi,* the

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poet talks in the guise of Hanumān, who narrates several stories to Sītā in order to prove he was sent by Rāma. Hanumān mentions many incidents, and one related in the second verse is not found in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The testimony of Hanumān:

O lady, beautiful as a garland
  bursting forth with blossoming flowers,
  grant me leave to bow at your feet.
Graciously listen to my words.
O lady, gentle as a fawn,
  with eyes like twin flowers
  a perfect match for each other,
Recognize my story:
  Once during the night,
  when it was time for sweet experiences,
  you took a huge garland of jasmine flowers
  and bound [him] in your house.
This is my proof.

(*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 3.10.2)

The final line is to urge Sītā to believe in the authenticity of the narrator.

And finally we also have a reference to Rāma sharing a meal with Hanumān; this is seen as an exercise in his accessibility:

He did not dismiss the great son of the wind
  as a monkey, as a beast,
  as a being from a different class.
He held him in great esteem,
And with his love flowing greater than the sea,
He said: The good that you have done for me
  is beyond recompense!
[O Hanumān,] my friend of soothing words,
I shall eat with you—immediately!

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 5.8.2)

I have not been able to ascertain the origin of these stories. Since they are not in any of the Sanskrit epics or early *Purāṇas*, we have to assume the existence either of other works unavailable now or of an oral tradition in South India from which the Āḻvārs drew these incidents. These stories seem different in texture from poetic imagination and rhetoric, of which we do find a considerable amount in the Āḻvār poetry. Let us look at an example of poetic imagination: Periyāḻvār alludes to the fame of Hanumān while describing the greatness of the hill Govardhana, which was lifted by Kṛṣṇa:

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Like the king of the serpents opening his many hoods
and supporting the vast worlds,
Dāmodara's hand opened its five fingers
as a flower its petals
and held Govardhana aloft.
This is the hill where the monkeys carry their babies
and sing in praise of Hanumān,
who wreaked such havoc in Laṅkā,[v]
and lull their little ones to sleep.

(*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 3.5.7)

Clearly, the whole notion of monkeys on Govardhana singing lullabies in praise of Hanumān stems from the imagination of Periyāḻvār, as does the whole picture of Kṛṣṇa's fingers resembling the five hoods of the serpent that, according to Hindu cosmology, supports the worlds.

In some very unusual sets of verses in *The Sacred Four Thousand*, we hear the poet speaking in the voice of a character in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The more familiar pattern in North and South Indian *bhakti* is for the poet to identify himself/herself as a cowherd girl or a "heroine" in love with Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa. There are six sets of poems in the Āḻvār literature (amounting to sixty-three verses) in which the poet speaks as a character in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Thirty-three of these poems are in the *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* of Kulacēkara Āḻvār, who, according to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, was a great devotee of Rāma. A popular story in the thirteenth-century hagiography *The Splendor* says that once when the *Rāmāyaṇa* was being narrated, Kulacēkara (a king) was so overwhelmed by the thought of Rāma going to war with his monkey brigade that he immediately mobilized his troops to march in aid of Rāma.[59] Kulacēkara's poems are unique: he does not speak through the words of Sītā expressing her love for Rāma but through the words of his father and mother expressing theirs. Reliving the distress of Daśaratha in separation from Rāma when the latter departs to the forest, Kulacēkara says:

Without hearing him call me "Father" with pride and love,
Without clasping his chest, adorned with gems, to mine,
Without embracing him, without smoothing his forehead,
Without seeing his graceful gait, majestic like an elephant's,
Without seeing his face [glowing] like the lotus,
I, wretched one,
having lost my son, my lord,
Still live.

(*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 9.6)

These verses do not parallel any other mystical verses that I know of in Tamil

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devotion. We usually encounter love in a feminine mode and witness the love of a mother or a lover; but for the first time, here the father is involved in the drama.

Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's *Periya Tirumoḻi* has two sets of verses that are also unique. These songs are voiced not by a beloved of Rāma who misses him but by a group of demon associates (*rākṣasas*) of Rāvaṇa who are defeated in the battle at Laṅkā.[60] These *rākṣasas* now seek protection and refuge, and we may see these verses as paradigmatic of surrender to the Lord:

The dance of the rākṣasas:

The other day, our king
entered the forest of Daṇḍaka.
He abducted the perfect beauty,
the chaste woman, and was ruined.
We are not to blame!
  Do not kill us,
  O king of your clan!
Our tribe has been ruined by a woman;
You have given life to the gods.
  And now we fear;
  O son of Daśaratha,
We beat our drums, we dance our surrender.[61]

Our Rāvaṇa,
King with long red-gold hair,[62]
carried away a goddess called Sītā;
Look, he held her captive
in that fragrant grove.
  This was his undoing.
Kumbha and now Nikumbha
  have fallen in war.
Death comes in the form of a man.
Do not slay us with your bow.
    We fear;
We beat our drums, we dance our surrender.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 10.2.3, 5)

To the best of my knowledge, no other devotee speaks in the guise of a defeated *rākṣasa*. Not only do the poems express unique sentiments, but they are also a literary curiosity: the refrain, which seems to suggest a kind of dance in the face of defeat, is not found elsewhere in Tamil literature.

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Bhakti from the Viewpoint of a Devotee-Mother

Rāma, and more frequently Kṛṣṇa, are seen as babies and toddlers, and *The Sacred Four Thousand* has several poems celebrating the childhood of these *avatāras*. In later literature this mode of *bhakti* is called *vātsalya-bhāva;*[63] in Tamil this genre of poems is called Piḷḷai Tamil, or Tamil [verses in praise] of children.[64] Kulacēkara Āḻvār sings a lullaby for the baby Rāma:

The words of Kauśalyā:

The other day,
As a baby on the banyan leaf,
You swallowed the worlds.[A]
You killed Vāli
and gave the kingdom to his brother;[W]

O dark gem of Kaṇapuram,
where the waves wash gems to the shore;
O ruler of the city called Āli,
O you who abide in Ayodhyā!
Tālēlō.

(*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 8.7)

Kulacēkara Āḻvār, Periyāḻvār, and Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār sing lullabies to the baby Kṛṣṇa. Periyāḻvār's *Tirumoḻi* contains the most extensive and some of the most beautiful expressions of Piḷḷai Tamil. In about two hundred verses the poet, identifying himself as Yaśodā, enjoys the childhood of Kṛṣṇa. Many of these songs are still sung in Tamil households. The themes of the poems include the festivities at the birth of the baby, singing a lullaby, showing the moon, the swaying movements of the child, which are likened to those of a tender plant, teaching him to clap his hands, his halting footsteps, asking him to drink his milk, playing hide and seek, bathing him, piercing his ears, combing his hair, adorning his head with flowers, giving him protective amulets, etc.

It is in Periyāḻvār that we see this mood of maternal affection at its height. When Periyāḻvār identifies himself as Yaśodā, the reader participates in the joy of the mother watching the divine child grow. Emotions seem reversed here: the protector seems to need protection, the tender maternal love (Sanskrit: *vātsalya*) that is the Lord's attribute is now *directed* at him by a human being. The devotee hovers over the Lord, speaking as a mother, protecting him from enemies, joyfully nursing him, and playing with him. In a sense, this is the ultimate paradox of the divine incarnation: the omnipotent Lord appears as a vulnerable child just to indulge and gratify the emotional *bhakti* of the devotee, who seeks to protect, jealously guard over, and serve his beloved. The Tamil devotee perceives the Lord's divine play (*līlā* in Sanskrit literature) as a child's

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frolic. The enduring appeal of these poems to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community may in part spring from the understanding that parental affection for a child is a love that is sheer joy just to experience and seeks little in return.

While the Āḻvārs' *bhakti* is addressed to both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, there is a difference in the temper of the poems addressed to them. The "maternal" poems are addressed to both *avatāras,* but many more are written to Kṛṣṇa. The poems also differ in texture: the Āḻvārs speak of Rāma's dignity and valor more than his childhood or pranks, but they rejoice in both Kṛṣṇa's infancy and his bravery. Lynn Ate writes that Periyāḻvār constantly reminds the reader that Kṛṣṇa is a child. In discussing the structure of his *Tirumoḻi,* she says:

> Perhaps it was, in part, his desire to emphasize Kṛṣṇa's childish nature that led him to be structurally innovative. In his continued use of doubly repeated lines, we must note that the subject matter of those repetitions are generally related to Kṛṣṇa's child-like personality rather than being devoted to more cosmic aspects of the deity. Perhaps, it was the Āḻvār's very desire to stress Kṛṣṇa's role as a baby that led him to use these repetitions twice per verse as a means of keeping that child image alive in the reader's mind to make it clear, in no uncertain terms, that the focal point of the text is the Baby, not the Deity.[65]

I find this emphasis on Kṛṣṇa as a baby particularly visible in the lullabies. Compare Yaśodā's lullaby for Kṛṣṇa and Kauśalyā's for Rāma:

Yaśodā's lullaby:

A colorful little cradle of hammered gold,
studded with gems, intertwined with diamonds—
Brahmā brought it with love for you.

My little dwarf, *tālēlō,*
O Lord who paced the worlds,[B] *tālēlō.*

(*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 1.3.1)

Kauśalyā's lullaby:

You created all the worlds on the lotus flower,
You bent your bow and split the broad breast of Tāṭaka,[X]
O dark gem of Kaṇapuram,
You grant the desires of all who see you.[66]
O ruler of all the eight directions,
O descendant of Raghu,
Tālēlō.

(*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 8.2)

In this and other verses, Yaśodā constantly reminds the listeners that Kṛṣṇa

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is a baby, but Kauśalyā sings of Rāma's proud lineage and exploits. Despite the tone of these verses, however, the Āḻvārs never let one forget that the incarnation as Rāma was an exercise in the Lord's accessibility and compassion. He did not have to undergo all that he did while on earth (*Tiruvāymoḻi* 7.5.2); he trekked the thorny forests, followed by Sītā, and yet this is the same Lord whose feet are revered by the immortal beings (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.5.1). One may say that in the Āḻvārs' perception, the incarnation as Rāma stands midpoint between the Lord's remoteness in his other incarnations and his rather remarkable camaraderie as Kṛṣṇa.

Thus we do not find exclusive *bhakti* to Rāma or Kṛṣṇa in the Āḻvār poems. Rāma is identified with the Lord enshrined in a particular holy place, as well as with several other incarnations. The same Kulacēkara who talks in the guise of Kauśalyā and of Daśaratha (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 8.1–11 and 9.1–11) also sings as Devakī, the biological mother of Kṛṣṇa, who missed his childhood entirely (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 7.1–10). Kulacēkara also identifies himself as a cowherd girl complaining of Kṛṣṇa's lies (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 6.1–10). It would be quite misleading, then, to ask if the Āḻvārs were devotees of Kṛṣṇa or of Rāma. We do not encounter exclusive devotion but rather a situation in which the Lord enshrined in a temple is held to be extremely important and is then identified as Viṣṇu and all his manifestations.

A Territorial Theology

The Lord in the Temple and the Avatāra

The Lord enshrined in the temple is the focus of many Āḻvār hymns. This incarnation in the temple is known in later Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology as *arcāvatāra*, "the descent as one who can be worshiped," and we shall use the word *arcā* for convenience in this chapter, even though the Āḻvārs do not use the term.[67]

The Āḻvārs celebrate several holy places in their songs, and later the number of these places was given as 108, a holy number in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions.[68] Devotees regard the *arcā* in the temple as the Lord present on earth, just as he is present in his celestial abode, Vaikuṇṭha, and in the Sea of Milk. The *arcā* is a descent into this realm like the *avatāras* Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, et al. The *avatāra* as Varāha, Narasiṁha, Rāma, or Kṛṣṇa is identified with the *arcā* of Viṣṇu in a particular place. To Kulacēkara Āḻvār, for example, the deity in Tillai Citrakūṭam *is* Rāma, the same Rāma who was born in Ayodhyā and who resided in Citrakūṭa during his forest sojourn:

> In the beautiful city of Ayodhyā, encircled by towers,
> A flame that lit up all the worlds
> appeared in the Solar race
> and gave life to all the heavens.

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This warrior, with dazzling eyes,
Rāma, dark as a cloud, the First One, my only Lord,
is in Citrakūṭa, city of Tillai.
When is the day
when my eyes will behold him
and rejoice?

(*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 10.1)

In Kauśalyā's lullaby (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 8.7), Kulacēkara Āḻvār sings of the baby Rāma as "the dark gem of Kaṇapuram" and as "the ruler of the city called Āli."

The most popular of the 108 sacred places is Śrī-raṅgam, near the modern city of Tirucchirapalli. All the Āḻvārs (except Maturakavi) sang in praise of the Lord in this temple. The most verses on any subject are addressed to this deity. Indeed, 247 verses are written in praise of Śrī-raṅgam and the Lord there,[69] and the sacred hill Vēṅkaṭam is the focus of 202 songs.[70] Every place had its local legends and a story that explained the presence of the Lord there. The traditional history of Śrī-raṅgam, for instance, connects the manifestation of the deity to Vibhīṣaṇa, Rāvaṇa's younger brother. Vibhīṣaṇa wanted to take an image of Rāma to Laṅkā; Rāma did not want to refuse his devotee, but he really did not want to reside in Laṅkā, a city where his beloved wife Sītā had suffered. So, through a series of events, he made sure that his *arcā* became fixed in Śrī-raṅgam, en route to Laṅkā.[71]

The Āḻvārs seem to be aware of some form of this legend. Periyāḻvār refers to the Śrī-raṅgam temple as the place where the Lord reclines and "directs his flower-like eyes toward the fortified city of Laṅkā for the sake of Vibhīṣaṇa" (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.9.2). Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār talks specifically of Viṣṇu reclining with his back to the north and facing Laṅkā in the south, an unusual axis for the *arcā* (*Tirumālai* 19). He reinforces this theme in his other work *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻucci*, ("Awakening the Lord from Bed," a panegyric usually addressed to a king).[72] In this work, Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār sings in praise of the reclining Lord of Śrī-raṅgam, addressing him as "the King of Ayodhyā" and as "the bull among celestials, who with his bow ruined the entire clan of demons at Laṅkā" (verse 4). In the next verse he describes the temple at Śrī-raṅgam as the place where "the King of Laṅkā serves the Lord." We can also keep in mind that this was the Āḻvār who spoke of the squirrel helping Rāma to build the bridge, and he seems to have known of various legends that become characteristic of the Tamil versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

The Lord in the Temple and in the Devotee's Heart

The Lord in a temple is also seen to be the same god who is within the *bhakta's* heart. Consider the poem of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār that identifies Viṣṇu's *avatāra* as Vāmana with the Lord who reclines in the flood [of the Ocean of Milk]

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and also with the one enshrined at Vēṅkaṭam. The poet goes on to say that this is the same god who resides within his heart:

In deceit,
he procured three paces of land
from Mahābali and then measured them;[B]
It is he who reclines in the flood,
they say,
It is he who resides in Vēṅkaṭam.
O look, my friend!

He reclines in the flood, he resides in Vēṅkaṭam,
but still,
Behold! He is within the heart of Kalikaṇṛi,*

Oh *cāḻalē*!

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.5.1)

Nammāḻvār also identifies the Lord in heaven as Kṛṣṇa who "danced with the pots,"[73] as the deity in Tirukkaṭitāṇam, and as the god who seized the poet's heart as a temple:

The very father who danced with the pots,[Y]
and who has heaven as his temple,

While being worshiped by the divine beings
who reside in temples,
took Tirukkaṭitāṇam as his temple.
He also
seized my heart as his temple.

(*Tvm* 8.6.5)

Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār says:

The days are gone when I saw,
at Ūrakam, the standing Lord.
At Pāṭakam I beheld my father sitting,
and at Vēhkā he reclined.

I was not born then; and when I was born
I never did forget
that he stands, abides, and reclines
within my heart.

(*Tiruccanta-viruttam* 64)

* a name of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār

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Periyāḻvār says that those who build a temple in the heart and worship the deity Mātavaṉ (Skt.: Mādhava) with flowers of ardor will escape the torments of hell (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.5.3).

It is to the Lord enshrined in the temple that the Āḻvārs frequently surrender. They regard his feet (*caraṇ, aṭi*) as their fortress (*araṇ*) and refuge (*caraṇam*, from Skt. *śaraṇa*). The Lord grants refuge and safety (*aṭaikkalam*).[74] Kulacēkara sings of the Lord of Vittuvakkōṭṭu:

> My Lord of Vittuvakkōṭṭu,
> city surrounded by groves
> filled with fragrant blossoms,
>
> A mother may push away her infant in anger,
> and yet he thinks of her loving grace and weeps.
>
> You may not dispel my grief, [yet I say]
> There is no refuge other than your sacred feet.
>
> (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 5.1)

Later generations of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas have held Nammāḻvār's verses to the Lord at Vēṅkaṭam to be paradigmatic of *prapatti*:[75]

> O you on whose breast
> resides the lady of the flower,
> who says
> she cannot move away from you
> for even a split second!
>
> O incomparably famous one,
> O you who own the three worlds,
> My ruler!
>
> O Lord of sacred Vēṅkaṭam,
> desired by the peerless immortals and sages!
>
> I, your servant, who am without shelter,
> sat at your feet and took refuge.
>
> (*Tvm* 6.10.10)

The Āḻvār who is without refuge seeks the Lord as his *only* refuge and confesses that though he has done nothing to deserve the Lord's grace, he still desires the Lord:

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O Lord who has the serpent for a bed!
I have not done any [pious ritual] act
I have no intelligence,
and yet
I cannot move away from you and survive.

O King, sitting in state,
enthroned in the city of Cirīvaramaṅkalam,
a city
filled with fertile fields of red paddy
interwoven with blossoms of lotus flowers,

I am not a burden on you!

(*Tvm* 5.7.1)

It is to his Lord enshrined in a temple that the Āḻvār confesses his past sins and speaks of the wasted years when he sought other pleasures:

I desired the pleasures
of women with beautiful breasts,
women with delicate foreheads, wide shoulders,
and smiles radiant like the glowing moon;
and now,
knowing the error of my ways,
ignorant and unable
to end the misery of repeated births,
I think and fret.

Ashamed of my copulation with young girls,
I have come and reached your sacred feet,
My Lord at Naimicāraṇyam.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 1.6.1)

Without any feeling and with cruel mind,
with actions filled with rage,
Wandering with packs of dogs,
rejoicing in sport,
I ran and roamed, destroying several lives.
The world of Yama has to be refashioned
to fit my crimes.[76]
O supreme one! O you on the Sea of Milk!
Searching,
I have come and reached your sacred feet,
My Lord at Naimicāraṇyam.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 1.6.6)

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I quake;
  though I have not seen,
  I have heard of the old path
  traversed by those
  who have thought with their minds,
  uttered with their mouths,
  and acted with [their limbs]
  without heed for justice.

O Lord who broke the wood-apple tree![z]
O Celestial One
  who will not move away from my heart!
I, your servant, [have been] a hypocrite.
O eternal poison of the demons!
I have come and reached your sacred feet,
  My Lord at Naimicāraṇyam.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 1.6.7)

The Āḻvārs profess that they are unworthy to approach the Lord and yet know of no other refuge. While we find this sentiment expressed predominantly in the context of a temple, there are also several verses addressed to a "generic" Viṣṇu. This verse by Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār is typical:

I was not born in the four clans,
I have not learned the four good arts,
I have not conquered my senses,
  O pure Lord!
I have no fortune;
  My Lord,
I have nothing to grasp
but your twin feet.

(*Tiruccanta-viruttam* 90)

The devotees take refuge in the feet of the Lord in a temple, but they also praise the holy place where he is enshrined.

The Infinite Domain Realized in the Local Landscape

Like the bard who praised the land of the chieftain in Tamil *puṟam* poetry, the Āḻvār praises the town and country where the Lord rules. Cities loom with majestic terraces, rivers carry precious gems, fields are covered with swaying paddy, and temples are surrounded by lush groves:

This primordial Lord stands in Tirukkurukūr,
where jeweled terraces rise like mountains.

(*Tvm* 4.10.1)

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He stands in Tirukkurukūr,
where the red paddy grows in fertile fields
and lotus blossoms thrive. . . .

(*Tvm* 4.10.4)

Lord of the sacred Vēṅkaṭa,
where sparkling cascades crash,
carrying gems, gold, and pearls!

(*Tvm* 6.10.3)

My father, Lord of the beautiful Kāṭkarai—
Fortune grows in its very groves.

(*Tvm* 9.6.5)

The sacred place is not just beautiful and prosperous; it also has salvific power. The sins (Tamil: *viṇai*) of one who goes to Anantapuram will vanish (*Tvm* 10.2.2), and just saying the name Tirumāliruñcōlai ("The grove where the Lord abides") is enough for the Lord to fill the heart of the poet:

"The hill and grove of the holy Lord," I said,
and the holy Lord entered and filled my heart.

This is the Lord who dwells
in the southern City of Names,

where the river Kāvērī glides along,
swelling with luminous gems of brilliant hue.

(*Tvm* 10.8.1)

It is the local deity whose beauty entrances the Āḻvār; it is to this deity that he sends messages of love; it is this deity whom he addresses as a lover and with whom he seeks union. While Kṛṣṇa and, to a lesser extent, Rāma are the focus of a devotion that is simultaneously erotic and submissive, an overwhelming number of songs, where the Āḻvār assumes the role of the "heroine," are addressed to Viṣṇu enshrined in a temple.

Longing for the Beloved

Several poems in *The Sacred Four Thousand* are spoken from the viewpoint of a girl. The Āḻvār speaks in the voices of a lovesick heroine, the girl's foster mother or real mother, or her friend—all characters in *akam* poetry.[77] One major difference is that while no names are mentioned in *akam* poetry, the *bhakti* songs of the Āḻvārs cast Viṣṇu in the role of the absent lover and the poet in the role of the "heroine." The poems are located in the Tamil landscape of *akam* poetry: the Āḻvār speaks against a background of seashores, mountains, and

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cities, frequently alluding to the local temple. The landscape, of course, reflects the mood of the love poems. This focus on the local temple is important to note in connection with recent claims that the Āḻvār poetry can be labeled as *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and "Kṛṣṇaism."[78] The love songs are addressed more frequently to the God in the local temple than to Kṛṣṇa, and this local God is then identified as any one of his several *avatāras*.

Apart from these poems, at least thirty-eight sets of songs, and the entire *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇṭāḷ, are located in mythical landscapes that involve Kṛṣṇa or Rāma directly.[79] We have already noted the sets in which the Āḻvār speaks to Rāma. Of the various poems located in the milieu where Kṛṣṇa was born and raised, many verses are composed from the viewpoint of his foster mother, Yaśodā, some from the stance of other cowherd women, either admiring or complaining about Kṛṣṇa, and a very few from the perspective of young cowherd girls longing for him. There is also one unusual set sung by Devakī, the mother of Kṛṣṇa (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 7.1–11).

Thus only a small fraction of the Āḻvār poetry is spoken from the viewpoint of a lovesick girl, and among these, very few are addressed directly to Kṛṣṇa; most of them are directed to the Lord in a local temple. Typical is this poem by Nammāḻvār in which the "heroine's" mother exclaims:

> Perhaps she is Piṉṉai;
> perhaps this is the Lady of the Earth?
> Perhaps it is the Auspicious Lady (Tiru)
> who is reborn here?
> What mystery is this?
>
> She stands, calling only the Lord.
> She bows her head,
> hearing only the name of the sacred city:
> Tolaivillimaṅkalam,
> where he came ahead
> to stand, sit, and dwell.[80]
>
> (*Tvm* 6.5.10)

It is to the Lord in the temple that the "heroine" sends messages. Āṇṭāḷ, Nammāḻvār, and Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār communicate their love to him through messengers; clouds, birds, the wind, and even bees are entreated to carry messages across streams, towns, and mountains to their beloved one. Nammāḻvār's poem is typical of several in this genre:

> O dark bird, seeking food with your beloved mate!
> Go see the Lord who devoured all the worlds,[A]
> The master of Tiruvaṇvaṇṭūr, the beautiful city,
> which rings with the sounds of Vedic sacrifices.

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Worship his feet with your hands,
and tell him of my excellence.
I am his servant.

(*Tvm* 6.1.2)

Still, occasionally, the Āḻvārs will also express their love directly for Rāma and Kṛṣṇa from the viewpoint of a girl. While there are more erotic poems addressed to Kṛṣṇa, it is significant that Rāma is not completely absent from the scene. The difference in erotic sentiments aroused by the two incarnations seems to be one of degree. Let us consider two poems written by the same poet. In the first song quoted, Nammāḻvār talks in the guise of a heroine pining for Kākutstha (Rāma), and in the second he speaks in the guise of a cowherd girl talking to Kṛṣṇa:

The words of the girl pining for Rāma:

My heart, even you are not on my side!
The long night
stretches out like an aeon
without break of dawn.
If my Kākutstha
with his shining, angry bow
does not come,
I shall kill myself,
—I don't know how.
I've been born as a woman,
sinner that I am.
Even the sun does not rise;
He hides his face,
refusing to see such grief.

(*Tvm* 5.4.3–4)

The following verse, addressed to Kṛṣṇa, is far more passionate:

The words of the cowherd girl:

You were gone the whole day,
grazing cows, Kaṇṇā!
Your sweet words burn my soul.
Evening tramples like a rogue [elephant],
and the fragrance of the jasmine buds,
unleashing my desires, blows upon me.
Embrace my beautiful breasts
with the fragrance of the wild jasmine
upon your radiant chest.

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Give me the nectar of your mouth,
and adorn my lowly head
with your jeweled lotus hands.

(*Tvm* 10.3.5)

In many poems the heroine longs to see and to unite with her beloved, and the songs are strongly reminiscent of early *akam* poems. The "heroine" laments:

Where do I go from here?

I can't stand the soft bells, the gentle breeze,
the dark water-lily, the darkness that conquers day,
the dulcet notes, the jasmines, the refreshing air.

The Lord, my beguiling one
who creates, bores through,[C]
swallows, and spews this earth,[A]
who measures here and beyond,[B]
does not come.

Why should I live?

(*Tvm* 9.9.2)

The longing and waiting seen in the Tamil poems are reflected through a familiar landscape: the jasmine, the darkness, and the separation from the hero all figure in these verses from the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. All three of the verses quoted above portray a situation where the lover is, or has been, absent—a situation that is called *mullai* ("jasmine") in early Tamil poetry and that reflects separation. Separation is always portrayed as occurring at night or evening, and the jasmine flower symbolizes this situation in love. In this connection we may recall a verse that we quoted earlier: Hanumān, describing a particular incident to the captive Sītā in Laṅkā, mentions that she had bound her husband playfully with a garland of jasmine flowers. Sītā, a prisoner of Rāvaṇa's, is obviously feeling intense separation from Rāma. The mention of jasmine flowers reinforces in the minds of the Tamil audience the grief of separation that Sītā feels. In confessing their own passion for the Lord, the Āḻvārs are sensitive to the associative structure of the early Tamil love situations and landscapes.

A popular theme in classical Tamil poetry was the situation in which the family expresses concern for a young girl's moodiness and makes a wrong diagnosis about her condition. The family would believe she was possessed and call in an exorcist.[81] In the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, the motif appears in a slightly different way: the ecstatic dancing and worship are seen as futile because they are directed to a wrong god; the friend of the "heroine" who is diagnosed as being possessed speaks in this poem and suggests that the real cause for the "heroine's" illness is separation from Viṣṇu:

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The words of the concerned friend:

Worship the sacred feet
of the Lord of the celestials
With those who know the *Vedas*
and cure this girl's disease.

Instead,
you speak improper words,
do improper deeds.

You sprinkle liquor, your kettledrum roars,
You dance in ecstasy—
all this is base.

(*Tvm* 4.6.8)

In several places the *Tiruvāymoḻi* refers to ecstatic dancing (Tamil: *aṇaṅkāṭutal*) that resembles possession. Nammāḻvār sings and dances to express his passion:

There is none equal, none superior, to the Lord.
My tongue sings only his songs.
My limbs dance in ecstasy (*aṇaṅku*).

My limbs dance in ecstasy
and bow before him.

(*Tvm* 1.6.3–4)

Elsewhere, in a "girl" poem, the mother describes the "heroine:"

Dancing, dancing, her body wilting,
singing, singing, eyes pouring tears,
ever seeking, crying "Narasiṁha,"[M]
is my girl with a glowing forehead.

(*Tvm* 2.4.1)

In classical Tamil poetry we frequently encounter a theme called "riding the palmyra horse (*maṭal*)."[82] The lover would force the village elders to permit him to unite in marriage with his beloved. As an act of desperation, the man would mount the mock horse and publicly announce his love for the girl. According to Tamil conventions, only a man had a right to ride a *maṭal*. In the *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḻvār and in two poems of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār (*Periya Tirumaṭal* and *Ciṟiya Tirumaṭal*), the poets, both male, speak about riding a *maṭal*, even when they have adopted the guise of a girl. Nammāḻvār, here speaking as a girl, says:

Lifting my modesty, stealing my heart,
the Lord of the divine ones reaches the high heavens.

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My friend, this I swear:
I shall shock all the earth,
I shall do weird deeds
and ride the palmyra stem like a horse.

With no sense of shame, I shall ride
the palmyra stem through every street in town,
and women from all the lands will cheer me on.
And I shall demand from the Lord
a cool blossom from the *tuḻai* plant
and adorn my head with it.

(*Tvm* 5.3.9–10)

The Āḻvār's waiting is not all in anxiety and separation. There are several verses in which there is a quiet longing not necessarily spoken from a girl's viewpoint:

You became
water, land, fire,
time, the soaring sky,
The radiance
of the sun and the moon.

You became Śiva and Brahmā.
Hold aloft your discus and conch
and visit me, a sinner, some day.
Heaven and earth
will rejoice.

(*Tvm* 6.9.1)

Āṇṭāḷ dreams that the Lord comes as a bridegroom and marries her; he clasps her hand and they take seven steps around the fire.[83] Nammāḻvār likens his heart to the fields in which the crop of love grows; the gossip of the villagers was the fertilizer, and thinking of the cloud-hued one makes "her" love grow to immense proportions (*Tvm* 5.3.4). In occasional anger, the Lord is even rejected (*Tvm* 6.2.1–11) or called "cruel and wicked" (*Tvm* 5.3.5) because of the infidelity that the poet imagines.

The Āḻvārs' poems indicate that their pleas were answered and their longing was fulfilled. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār says:

Today I found the Lord
whom the *bhaktas* enjoy
like a tender fruit.

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Today, I found the tender thief
who robbed my heart
with his love.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 7.3.8)

In Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, the earlier fulfillments seem temporary, but the last few sets are filled with the confidence of a goal reached, a union achieved. The poet describes earlier unions in various ways:

My life! You who thrive in this flesh,
Rejoice! The great one of the celestials,
Madhusūda, my Lord, took you, and then
He and I and everything else
mingled within him.

It was like a mixture
of honey, milk, butter, syrup, and nectar.

(*Tvm* 2.3.1)

Nammāḻvār follows this union with a realization of his relationship with the Lord. Here, and after another union in a later set of poems, the Āḻvār speaks of his inability to do anything in return to the Lord as thanksgiving for the union:

You mingled with my soul, and for that great help
I rendered my soul to you; can I now retrieve it?
You are my soul, O Lord who devoured the seven worlds![A]
Who is my soul? Who am I?
You who gave have now reclaimed!

(*Tvm* 2.3.4)

O You who gave me your feet as a refuge!
I have no recompense for you;
even my soul is yours,
O Lord of Cirīvaramaṅkalam!

(*Tvm* 5.7.10)

The Āḻvār submits his life as a token of his thanksgiving, but this surrender is followed by his realization that what he surrendered has always belonged to the Lord and that the Lord has simply retrieved his "property."[84]

Sometimes the union resembles possession. In an unusual set of verses, Nammāḻvār, in the guise of the heroine's mother, says:

"It is I who created the earth and the sea,
It is I who am the earth and the sea;
It is I who asked for the earth and the sea;[B]
It is I who bored through the earth and the sea;[C]
It is I who ate the world and the sea."[A]

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Is my daughter possessed
by the Lord of the earth and the sea?

What do I tell
the people of this earth and the sea?
What can I tell my daughter,
who claims to know the earth and the sea?

(*Tvm* 5.6.1)

Other verses about a union are more subdued:

Who is my companion? Frightened,
I search, sinking like a ship
in a stormy sea of life and death.

Radiant and glorious,
bearing aloft his discus and conch,
He comes and becomes one
even with me, his servant.

(*Tvm* 5.1.9)

Toward the end of the *Tiruvāymoḷi,* Nammāḻvār uses the analogy of eating to describe the passionate, absorbing nature of the unions.[85] The Āḻvār and the Lord enter each other and fill each other:

The Lord who dwelt in the City of Names
Said, "I shall not move from you!"
He entered my heart and filled it!

I have caught
the Lord, whose stomach was not quite filled,
Even when he ate the seven clouds, the seven seas,
the seven mountains and worlds[A]—

And I contain him!

(*Tvm* 10.8.2)

He of the sacred City of Names,
He, the Lord residing in the Sacred Grove,[86]
Said, "I am here to stay."
He entered my heart, filling it.
I have obtained my love;
I ate the nectar and rejoiced.

(*Tvm* 10.8.6)

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Transfixed, he stands within my eyes.
He,
  greater than comprehension,
  subtle focus of all thought,
  sweetness of the seven notes,
Lord of the sacred City of Names,
  surrounded by pavilions
  studded with colorful gems,
entered my heart.

(*Tvm* 10.8.8)

In these poems, the Lord who guzzled the seven worlds is now contained by the poet: the Lord of a temple has united with him.

And finally, in the last set of poems in the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, Nammāḻvār realizes and describes his victorious and ultimate union with the Lord in terms of such eating and enjoying of each other:

Just whom can I turn to
if you let me stray outside your hold?
What is mine? Who am I?
Like red-hot iron drinking water,
You drank my life to exhaustion[87] and
then became nectar, never-ending for me.

Becoming nectar that never ends for me,
My love, you dwelt in my soul, within my life,
and ate them as if you could not have your fill.
  What more can you eat?
You, dark as a *kāya* flower,
  eyes like lotus,
  lips red as fruit,
Are the beloved of the lady of the flower,
  So fit for you.

(*Tvm* 10.10.5–6)

While the unions are usually personal, there is one unusual set of verses in the *Tiruvāymoḻi* in which Nammāḻvār describes a celebration of a cosmic redemption, and the earth is filled with devotees glorifying the Lord:

Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!
  The persistent curse of life is gone;
  The agony of hell is destroyed;
  Death has no place here.
  [The force of] Kali is destroyed.
Look for yourself!

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The followers of the sea-colored Lord
swell over this earth, singing with melody,
dancing and whirling [with joy].
We see them.

(*Tvm* 5.2.1)

The whirling age of Kali ends;
the divine ones also enter.
The golden age dawns,
and floods of great joy sweep over the land.

The followers of Him
who is dark as a cloud, my Lord,
the one colored like the sea,
Fill this earth, singing with melody.
They are all over the land.

(*Tvm* 5.2.3)

The Āḻvārs regard the joy of singing about and worshiping the Lord as an end in itself, a salvation realized on this earth with the dawning of a golden age. The devotees "uproot disease, hatred, poverty, and suffering. Singing melodiously, they jump and dance" (*Tvm* 5.2.6), and everyone is exhorted to "worship and live" (*Tvm* 5.2.6 and 8). These servants "take flowers, incense, lamps, sandalwood paste, and water and then worship Accuta (Skt.: Acyuta) with desire" (*Tvm* 5.2.9); the poet tells us that "if you worship him, there will be no more age of Kali" (*Tvm* 5.2.10). Thus the Āḻvārs regard worship and the singing of the divine names as the most expressive forms of devotion. These are seen to be not just the *way* to immortal life but the *goal* itself.

Manifestations of Devotion

Worship and the Singing of Divine Names

The Āḻvārs call the Lord by several names, and in many didactic verses they ask the people of the world to sing his thousand names. Nammāḻvār says that even "one name is like a thousand" (*Tvm* 10.2.2). Uttering the name yields several benefits:

O you who desire to obtain
Kaṇṇaṉ's feet,
think of his sacred name.
Nāraṇa is the mighty refuge.

(*Tvm* 10.5.1)

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Come near him every day;
bring flowers
that do not wilt or fade;
sing his name;
you can even obtain heaven.

(*Tvm* 10.5.5)

Chant the name Mādhava;
repeat it;
no sin will stick;
no sin will touch you, ever.

(*Tvm* 10.5.7)

The sins shall not touch you, ever.

He has the color
of a dark rain cloud.
Those who say his name
shall become immortal.

(*Tvm* 10.5.8)

Within just a single set of verses, the poet has said that chanting the Lord's name is the way to obtain his feet, to get to heaven, to get rid of sins (*viṉai*), and to become immortal. The name itself has salvific value, like a sacred place. The *Periya Tirumoḻi* of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār begins with a description of the amazing grace that was bestowed on the poet when he discovered the divine name, and each verse ends with a phrase celebrating "the name Nārāyaṇa" (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 1.1.1–10). Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār exhorts his heart to "spread [the glory] of the thousand names and serve the feet of the Lord at Piriti" (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 1.2.7). Periyāḻvār asks everyone to name their children after the Lord, "for the mother of a Nāraṇa will not go to hell;" this forms the refrain of an entire set of songs (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.6.1–10). Singing the name of the Lord is one of the most expressive forms of devotion, and the associates of Rāmānuja in the later Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition continued to stress the importance of the divine name.

Along with the name, some of the Āḻvārs considered the chanting of the "sacred eight syllables" (*tiruveṭṭu eḻuttu*) to be extremely important. These eight syllables (Skt.: *aṣṭākṣara*) are said to be *oṁ namo nārāyaṇāya* in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition,[88] and Periyāḻvār, Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār, and Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār refer to them. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār refers to Vēṅkaṭam as the place where stands the Lord who cuts the birth [cycles] of people who chant both his sacred name and the eight syllables (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 1.8.9). In Kaṉapuram he says that since he has learned the sacred eight syllables he has become the servant of the servants of God. Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār says that those who chant the eight syllables of the Lord's name will have the ability to rule the skies (*Tiruccanta-viruttam* 77).

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The Āḻvārs glorify the adoration of the Lord's feet in several verses. They advise their hearts and minds to worship the Lord ("O my mind! Worship his radiant feet, which destroy all sorrow, and rise!" *Tvm* 1.1.1), and in some didactic verses they urge others to do so:

> He who reclines over the deep waters
> on the serpent who has a fearful mouth:
> He shall rule.
>
> Approach him every day;
> Place flowers at his feet.
>
> (*Tvm* 10.5.4)

> Sins will not rest on them
> who worship him with desire—
> Him who is beyond the reach of the immortal ones,
> Him who is so accessible to his devotees.
>
> (*Tvm* 10.5.9)

> Grievous sins, which cause darkness,
> and fearful enemies will flee;
> offer beautiful flowers that grow in pools
> and think of the Lord.
>
> (*Tvm* 10.5.10)

Poykai Āḻvār and Pūtat Āḻvār proclaim their devotion in majestic tones:

> With the earth as a bowl,
> the flowing oceans as the fuel,
> and the radiant sun as the flame,
>
> I worship the feet of the Lord,
> who holds aloft the fiery wheel,
> with my garland of verses,
> so my wheel of births may end.
>
> (*Mutal Tiruvantāti* 1)

> With love as the bowl,
> ardor as the fuel,
> thoughts that drip passion
> as the wick,
> I lit, with a melting [heart],
> the flaming lamp of wisdom
> to Nāraṇa—
> I who know the wisdom of Tamil.
>
> (*Iraṇṭām Tiruvantāti* 1)

Through worship, one gets his grace:

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To those who bow before him and worship him every day,
His grace is given so they can always be with him.
And so I worshiped,
bowed before, and adored him every day,
and kept him as my refuge in my mind.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 11.3.5)

Worship and the chanting of names are not merely *ways* to get divine grace: they are frequently seen as the *goal*. For Nammāḻvār there seems to be no greater happiness, and he says that he "wove garlands of words praising him and rejoiced for all time." (*Tvm* 4.5.5). He also says that no wish remains unfulfilled for those who worship and praise him:

Worshiping the Lord—
who rules the seven worlds alone from Heaven,
who has undecaying fortune,
who rules with great ability,
who destroyed the angry beast[1]—
until my hands are satisfied,

Praising him;
Is there any need [not fulfilled] in seven generations
for one who can weave garlands of words for the Lord?

(*Tvm* 4.5.1)

In a prophetic vision, Nammāḻvār sees the devotees of Viṣṇu worshiping him with flowers, incense, and lamps:

Desire, worship and live.
This world is filled with servants
who worship with desire,
whose tongues chant the pure verses of the *Ṛg*,
who make no mistake in the way of wisdom,
who take flowers and incense,
lamps, sandalwood paste, and water
and worship Accuta with desire.

(*Tvm* 5.2.9)

When one worships him in this way, there is no more age of Kali (*Tvm* 5.2.10). Thus worship, which was seen as the *way* to immortality, heaven, and the eradication of sins, is also seen as an *end* in itself.

Worship is closely allied with the notion of service. The Tamil word for service is *aṭimai*, literally "to be at the feet" [of someone]. The word *aṭiyēṉ*, or "I who am at your feet," is used instead of "I" by the Āḻvārs in several verses, and loving service (Sanskrit: *kaiṅkarya*) rendered to the deity and to other de-

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votees of the Lord becomes a very important concept in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. Nammāḻvār states:

> Without pausing for a single moment,
> Residing inseparably with my Lord,
> We ought to render faultless service
> To the supreme father
> of my father, and of his father.
>
> (*Tvm* 3.3.1)

Āṇṭāḷ says that her only goal is to serve the Lord (*Tiruppāvai* 29). Periyāḻvār says that for seven generations his forefathers have been serving the Lord (*Tiruppallāṇṭu* 6). Nammāḻvār says that he comes from a clan of the Lord's servants (*Tvm* 6.10.1). Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār (whose name means "dust on the feet of devotees") declares that it is better to be born in the lowest caste and serve the Lord than to be born amidst those who claim to know the *Vedas* but forget that service to the Lord is the supreme goal.

The desire to be a servant of the Lord is not distinct from wanting to be his beloved, for there is no hierarchical gradation of *bhakti* within the Āḻvār poetry. In the same verse, the Āḻvār may speak of union and also indicate that he is the Lord's servant:

> Radiant and glorious,
> bearing aloft his discus and conch,
> He comes and becomes one,
> even with me, his servant.
>
> (*Tvm* 5.1.9)

"Servant of the Servants"

It is not only to Viṣṇu that they render service; it is also to other devotees of the Lord. Nammāḻvār's verses are striking:

> Even if they have fallen below the four castes,
> which hold this society together,
> and are outcastes of the outcastes[89]
> who have no trace of virtue,
>
> if they are the servants
> of the servants
> of those servants
> who have mingled within the Lord
>
> who bears the discus in his right hand,
> the gem-colored one,

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they are my masters.

(*Tvm* 3.7.9)

They are my masters—
those who are the servants
of the servants
of the servants
of the servants
of the servants
of the servants
of the servants
of my father,

My Lord, who eats the worlds that he paced
and lies on a banyan leaf like an innocent infant.^

(*Tvm* 3.7.10)

Periyāḻvār praises the good fortune of those who live near other devotees in a sacred place:

What penance could they have done,
those who live in Tirukkōṭṭiyūr,
a city where reside the *bhaktas*
filled with love, adoring the one
whose hue is that of a stormy cloud?

(*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.4.7)

Kulacēkara Āḻvār says that if he gets the dust from the feet of the devotees, he shall deem it more sacred than the waters of the [holy] river Gaṅgā (*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 3.9). The sacredness of the Lord is "contagious,"[90] and thus his servants and the dust on their feet are also sacred. The Āḻvārs regard association with the servants of God as conducive to salvation and to attainment of the Lord's grace. In Tamil one frequently speaks of "seven births" or "seven generations" to indicate infinite continuity;[91] thus the merit of worship seems to pass on for the "seven generations." The Āḻvārs speak of themselves as hailing from seven generations of devotees, or declare that seven generations of people before and after them are saved because of their association with the Lord:

Keśava's followers
for seven generations before
and seven generations to come
have great fortune and prosper along with us

through the Lord, my dark gem, my adored one,
the Lord of the celestials, my god, my Nārāyaṇa.

(*Tvm* 2.7.1)

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My father, his father,
  and further seven times more
were old servants of yours.
You have entered my heart
  and I shall not let you go.
My dear life, my king!
My Lord who, without pausing,
  gave me grace!
O perfect Lord who stands in Naṛaiyūr!

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 7.2.6)

The assumption that the Lord will shower grace on anyone even remotely associated with his devotee-servant has remained an extremely important aspect of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava faith. We see this concept articulated in the ritual described in this chapter's opening paragraph, and Nammāḻvār himself speaks of it:

Those servants [of the Lord];
who recite these ten verses
  of the thousand spoken by Caṭakōpaṉ,
  who was crowned by the Lord's grace,
shall also receive his grace.

(*Tvm* 10.5.11)

"Attaining the Sacred Feet of the Teacher"

Closely connected with the idea of the "contagious" grace available through association with other devotees is the idea of salvation through association with a spiritual teacher. We see this concept in a work in *The Sacred Four Thousand* called "The Short Knotted String," which is the only poem of Maturakavi Āḻvār. In this poem Maturakavi praises his teacher, Nammāḻvār. The author calls Nammāḻvār his mother, father, and ruler (verse 4), says that he (Maturakavi) has become the dear one (*aṉpaṉ*) of his teacher (v. 5), that all his love is addressed to the feet of his master (v. 10), and that he has attained the feet of his master (v. 2). Then Maturakavi offers his passionate service (*kātal aṭimai*) to him (v. 9). The love that the other Āḻvārs felt for the Lord is directed by Maturakavi Āḻvār to his teacher. Indeed, says Maturakavi, his teacher has destroyed the tough sins of the disciple and graciously proclaimed the essential meaning of the *Vedas* in a thousand Tamil verses (vs. 8 and 9).

In later years, "The Short Knotted String" becomes a scriptural authority for several themes. It proclaims devotion toward a spiritual teacher (*ācārya*) and becomes the authority for the later Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition of focusing extensive attention on the teacher, almost over and above the Lord. The teacher is the conduit to grace and salvation. Even today the euphemism for the word *death*

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(and by implication, salvation) in Śrī Vaiṣṇava parlance is "to attain the sacred feet of the *ācārya*."

Bhakti-yoga and Prapatti-Śaraṇāgati

While it was the Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature of the thirteenth century that delineated *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti* as paths to salvation, earlier works also mentioned them. The *ācāryas* Yāmuna and Rāmānuja talked extensively about *bhakti-yoga*, and Rāmānuja's cousin Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ interpreted some verses of the Āḻvārs as expressing *bhakti-yoga*. Before we conclude this chapter, we shall survey the Āḻvār literature to see what parts of their songs lend themselves to such an interpretation.

The Āḻvārs never use the word *bhakti-yoga*, though the words *patti* and *pattar* (Tamil for *bhakti* and *bhakta*) occur several times in the Āḻvār poems.[92] The words mean simply "devotion" and "devotee" and do not seem to indicate any arduous discipline. This is how modern commentators generally understand the word *bhakti* as used by the Āḻvārs. But there are passages in the Āḻvārs' poetry that *are* interpreted as references to the discipline of *bhakti-yoga*. We shall note these passages now and discuss the interpretations in later chapters. Consider the following two verses of Nammāḻvār:

> To solve the controversy between the six sects,[93]
> He, the one with countless good [attributes],
> explained the real way.
> The Lord, the primordial one, has no end.
>
> Stand in the worshipful *path of penance*,
> remove the weeds of the outer way.
> Dry the sticky [attachment to this world],
> heed his lesson, and know him.
>
> (*Tvm* 1.3.5)

Piḷḷāṉ, author of *The Six Thousand*, the first recorded commentary on the *Tvm*, interprets the phrase "path of penance" (*tava neṛi*)[94] as *bhakti-yoga*, rendering the line as "stand [by his side] steadfast in *bhakti-yoga*." Didactic verses that preach control of the senses and advise human beings to move to the Lord's side are interpreted as referring to *bhakti-yoga*, as in *Tvm* 1.2, from which come the following verses:

> Pull out by the roots
> thoughts of "you" and "yours."
> Reach God: there is nothing
> more right for your life.
>
> (*Tvm* 1.2.3)

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Move to his side,
your sins will vanish.
And then, when your body falls,
think of him.

(*Tvm* 1.2.9)

Piḷḷāṉ similarly paraphrases Nammāḻvār's confessions of inadequacy. The Āḻvār claims that he has not "done any ritual" (Tamil: *nōṉpu*); Piḷḷāṉ interprets this line as the poet's confession that he has not done "any *karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga*, or *bhakti-yoga*" (*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 5.7.1).

Apart from these verses, Piḷḷāṉ interprets an entire set of poems as discussing *bhakti-yoga*. In his introduction to *Tvm* 10.5, he says that "the next set of verses talks about *bhakti-yoga*." These verses stress the importance of reciting and chanting the names of the Lord and worshiping the deity. As we have seen, the Āḻvārs often refer to these activities, but not as part of a separate path or discipline leading to the Lord. Singing, recitation of the divine names, chanting of the "sacred eight syllables," bowing to the Lord, and performing ritual adoration of him are all extremely important expressions of one's *bhakti*, but they are not envisioned as part of an independent discipline called *bhakti-yoga*, distinct from surrender to the Lord.

In this chapter we have seen that the Āḻvārs surrender in many ways to Viṣṇu, especially as enshrined in the temple. They surrender because they have no other refuge, because he is the supreme deity and the *only* refuge, because they love him in many ways, and because they long for his protection and grace. From this Lord enshrined in the temple they seek the embrace of the beloved and the protection of a king, following the themes of classical Tamil *akam* and *puṟam* poetry.

The Āḻvārs' *bhakti* is seen in their fascination with the Lord enshrined in the local temple; indeed, the importance of place cannot be overestimated in Āḻvār and other Tamil poetry. The Āḻvārs understand the infinite domain of the everlasting Lord through finite space and immediate and mythical time.

The Āḻvārs identify the deity in a temple with the various *avatāras* of Viṣṇu and direct their devotion towards this deity and not exclusively to an *avatāra* like Rāma or Kṛṣṇa, as is seen in later, North Indian poetry. They conceptualize the Lord in the temple as the beloved or as an infant and sing songs from the perspective of characters from myths or classical Tamil poetry. The enshrined deity is also the same Lord who inhabits the devotee's heart. The location of the temple itself has salvific power and is described in considerable detail, as in *akam* poetry; the Āḻvārs, however, also pay attention to the concurrence of landscape and the underlying message and mood of the poems.

The Āḻvārs often remember Viṣṇu's *avatāras* and his redemptive acts. They are familiar with stories from Sanskrit literature, as well as with lore from an independent tradition. It is in the constant recollection of Viṣṇu's redemptive

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acts that their devotion becomes apparent, their salvation proclaimed. Just as Gajendra, Draupadī, Pār Makaḷ (the earth-goddess), and Sītā were saved by the Lord, so too is the poet.

Service to the Lord and his servants is held to be very important; in one set of verses Maturakavi Āḻvār glorifies the spiritual teacher.

The Āḻvār poems, as a product of Sanskrit and Tamil traditions have a twofold heritage. The later Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition acknowledged the Tamil poems of the Āḻvārs to be as important as the Sanskrit *Vedas*, epics, and *Purāṇas*, and articulated their twofold heritage in terms of what they called "dual Vedānta" (Ubhaya-vedānta). It is to the understanding of devotion in the writings of the teacher Yāmuna, who was so influenced by the poetry of the Āḻvārs and the Sanskrit *Purāṇas*, that we now turn.

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2

Yāmuna

In recounting the line of spiritual teachers, the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community acknowledges the twelve Āḻvārs and then a succession of teachers known as *ācāryas*. Nāthamuni is considered the first *ācārya*. His grandson Yāmunācārya (more popularly known in South India as Āḷavaṇṭār, or "he who came to rule") was born in the tenth century C.E.[1] and is the first Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* whose works are extant. The literary works of Yāmuna are of some consequence in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. He composed both philosophical works and devotional hymns, and his influence on Rāmānuja, the most important *ācārya* in the community, and on the tradition as a whole cannot be overestimated.

A study of Yāmuna's works shows both the continuity and the changes in how the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community expresses devotion. While Yāmuna patterned his *stotras* on some of the themes in Āḻvār poetry, his poems in turn served as paradigms upon which later ones were modeled. His careful discussions on the disciplines of devotion, knowledge, and action (*bhakti-yoga, jñāna-yoga,* and *karma-yoga*) have also been closely followed by later *ācāryas*. Yāmuna was the first Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* to acknowledge the importance and orthodoxy of the *Pāñcarātra* literature. By his adoption of *Pāñcarātra* and his introduction of the Āḻvārs' sentiments in Sanskrit (sometimes by direct translations of phrases used by them), and also by his combining his understanding of the *Pāñcarātra* and Āḻvār texts with his prodigious knowledge of the *Gītā*, the *Purāṇas*, and "mainstream" Sanskrit works, he fully accomplished what Neevel has felicitously labeled "integrating the classical with the popular."

Nāthamuni and Yāmuna were born in a little village about fifteen miles from Cidambaram, in Tamilnadu. The village is called Vīranārāyaṇapuram ("the town of the heroic Nārāyaṇa"), or Kāṭṭu Maṇṇārgudi ("the village of Kṛṣṇa that is located in a forest" or "the village of the forest Kṛṣṇa"),[2] and the Lord of the temple is known as "the Heroic Nārāyaṇa" (Vīra-nārāyaṇa). Thousands of pilgrims come here every year to bow before and receive the blessings of Nāthamuni and Yāmuna, who are now enshrined in image form in the temple. According to the priests, the four thousand hymns of the Āḻvārs that were revealed to Nāthamuni, the first Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, were first recited here.[3] Since this place saw the birth of the first two important *ācāryas* and the first

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recitation of *The Sacred Four Thousand,* the priests hold it to be the stage where the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition made its debut. At Vīranārāyaṇapuram we are told of the reforms that Nāthamuni and Yāmuna made in the ritual life of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. Because of their efforts, the tradition became the inheritor of the Ubhaya-vedānta, or the twin scripture: the Sanskrit canon and the Tamil *Veda* of the Āḻvārs. Other literatures from both languages were also used in philosophical exegesis as well as ritual.

The written works of Nāthamuni have not survived;[4] he is revered today largely for having compiled the works of the Āḻvārs and setting them to music.[5] From the introductory verses of Yāmuna's *Jewel of Hymns* (*Stotra-ratna,* henceforth referred to as *The Jewel*) we learn that he had "wisdom and renunciation (*jñāna* and *vairāgya*), and knowledge of and devotion for the lotus feet" of Viṣṇu, that he was a *yogī,* and that it was as if "*bhakti-yoga* had descended through his words"[6] (*The Jewel* 1–3).

The literary works of Yāmuna, which are all in Sanskrit, include philosophical treatises like the *Siddhi-traya;* the *Āgama-prāmāṇyam,* a fierce defense of the āgamic literature; a summary of the essential teachings of the *Gītā* (*Gītārtha-saṅgraha*); a panegyric (*stotra*) addressed to Śrī; and a prayer, vibrant with *bhakti,* that is hailed by Śrī Vaiṣṇavas as a "jewel" among hymns (*Stotra-ratna*). In the works of Yāmuna we find elaborations of the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* found in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* as well as expressions of ardent devotion and submission seen in the poetry of the Āḻvārs. To understand the devotional expressions of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community in the eleventh century, we now turn to these works of Yāmuna. We shall first discuss his understanding of *bhakti-yoga,* which reflects his reading of the *Bhagavad-gītā,* and then consider his submission to Viṣṇu.

Bhakti-yoga

In the *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* (henceforth abbreviated *Gs*), or *Essence of the Teachings of the Gītā,* Yāmuna defines the terms *bhakti-yoga, karma-yoga,* and *jñāna-yoga. Bhakti-yoga* as he speaks of it here is not just the *bhakti* (Tamil: *patti*) that the Āḻvārs referred to. The Āḻvārs used several Tamil words to indicate their intense love: *nēcam* ("love, affection, piety"), *aṉpu* ("love, attachment, affection, devotion, piety"), *kātal* ("warm attachment, fondness, lust, reverence, desire"), etc. There is no suggestion that their love was a result of anything but the most intense longing and passion, and certainly they gave no indication that *patti* is a careful discipline aided by *karma-* and *jñāna-yoga.* But for Yāmuna, *bhakti-yoga* is not just spontaneous love, but a careful discipline that is proclaimed in the *Bhagavad-gītā.* Furthermore, it is only through this *bhakti-yoga* that one can attain the Lord (*Gs,* verses 1 and 15). This *bhakti-yoga* is only brought about by knowledge and action (*jñāna* and *karma*):

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> It is the doctrine expounded by the Bhagavadgītā that Nārāyaṇa, who is the Supreme Brahman, can only be attained by means of bhakti which is brought about by observance of the dharma, acquisition of knowledge and renunciation of passion. . . .
>
> In the lectures 7–12 the bhakti-yoga, which can (only) be brought about by knowledge and action, is treated of as a means of attaining exact knowledge of God such as He is.[7]

Yāmuna defines *karma-yoga* as observing austerities/penances (*tapas*), undertaking pilgrimages (*tīrtha*), charities (*dāna*), sacrifices (*yajña*), etc. (*Gs* 23). *Jñāna-yoga* is fixing [the mind] on the pure soul (*ātmā*) (*Gs* 25). These lead to *bhakti-yoga*, defined as "the fixation on meditation (*dhyāna*), which arises from love (*prīti*) for the exclusive concentration on the Supreme Lord" (*Gs* 24). *Bhakti-yoga*, therefore, is the discipline of love that arises from *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga* and is impelled by deep affection (*prīti*). The *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* (24) makes it clear that all these *yogas* are interconnected.

Yāmuna says that the ninth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* talks about *bhakti-yoga* (*Gs* 13) and that the tenth chapter "sets forth in detail the knowledge of the infinite variety of the Lord's auspicious qualities and of the dependence of the universe on him." This knowledge helps awaken and increase *bhakti* (*Gs* 14).

Bhakti-yoga is quickly effective (*Gs* 16) and can even be used to attain complete sovereignty (*Gs* 27), or just to experience one's soul (*ātmā*):

> The bhakti-yoga serves to gain complete sovereignty, if that is desired. All three yogas serve to attain the ātman in its pure state, if that is desired.[8]

"Sovereignity" refers to this-worldly goals and successes; "experience of the ātman" refers to a limited spiritual gain, which is of little value compared with the real happiness that *bhakti* can lead to.

The highest aspirant on the path of *bhakti* is called the *jñānī*, or "the wise one," and wisdom consists of concentration on the Lord. Yāmuna clearly equates wisdom with love, which Rāmānuja elucidates later.

> The *jñānī* is exclusively concentrated on God; the life of his *ātmā* depends on Him; his happiness and unhappiness are brought about by his union (*saṁśleṣa*) with and separation (*viyoga*) from Him; his mind is focused on Him alone.
>
> When he has attained the *ātmā* by means of salutations (*vandana*) and litanies (*stuti*) and glorifications (*kīrtana*), which are called the *yoga* of meditation on God (*bhakti-yoga*), then all operations of his breath (*prāṇa*), mind, spirit, and senses are directed towards God, and, urged upon by his love (*prīti*) he practices everything, from the performance of his personal duties (*karma*) to the cultivation of *bhakti*, as a means of

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> attaining God. Renouncing all personal interest, he dedicates all to God in holy terror (*upāyatāṁ parityajya nyāsed deve tu tāma-bhīḥ*).[9]

Bhakti-yoga, which is a particular kind of meditation, is born of love and involves a recollection of the Lord's auspicious qualities and a knowledge of one's dependence on him. It is brought about by following one's *dharma,* by *jñāna-yoga,* and by *karma-yoga. Bhakti-yoga* can be used as a means for the realization of one's *ātmā* or for attainment of worldly pleasures, but the *jñānī,* the wise one, is the *bhakta* who seeks to attain only the Lord. *Bhakti-yoga* is the only way to see the Lord. It involves a surrender and a total dedication (*nyāsa*) of one's self to the Lord.[10] Since *bhakti-yoga* involves this total dedication of the self to the Lord, one who is qualified to be a devotee (*bhakti-yogādhikārī*) is also one who has surrendered himself to the Lord. In this context, litanies, worship, and salutations are not an alternative to *bhakti-yoga* but help in its formation.

This classic description of *bhakti-yoga,* as we shall see in the next chapter, was followed by Rāmānuja.

An Act of Devotion and Surrender to the Lord

The discussion on the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* represents one aspect of Yāmuna's thought. In *The Jewel,* Yāmuna blends images and themes drawn from other Sanskrit and Tamil works. The hymn, written in exquisite Sanskrit, sets a new pattern in the expression of *bhakti* and the appeal for protection. We have already seen what Yāmuna understood by *bhakti-yoga;* in *The Jewel* he says that even a simple act of love or devotion will be rewarded:

> Whoever joins his palms in adoration, thinking of your lotus feet, will immediately be freed of his evil and good will befall him.
>
> (*The Jewel* 28)[11]

Nammāḻvār similarly said:

> If we bow down before the feet of the Lord, which have auspiciousness, all our *karma* (Tamil: *viṇai*), which sticks to us, will vanish.
>
> (*Tvm* 1.3.8)

This act of devotion seems adequate: "Even a drop from the nectar-ocean of love (*anurāga*) for the lotus feet [of the Lord] will, in a moment, extinguish the forest fires of birth and death" (*The Jewel* 29). But in *The Jewel* Yāmuna also claims that he has no devotion and is therefore seeking refuge at the feet of the Lord.

The importance of seeking refuge (*śaraṇāgati*) is implied in the *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* itself. Verse 22 explicitly states that the most fundamental teaching of the *Gītā* (*śāstra-sārārtha*) occurs in the concluding part of the last lecture. The main teaching of the concluding verses of the *Gītā's* eighteenth chapter con-

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cerns *śaraṇāgati*,[12] but later *ācāryas* understand that this surrender accompanies and is ancillary to *bhakti-yoga* and that anyone who has the authority to practice *bhakti* (a *bhakti-yogādhikārī*) would dedicate himself entirely to the Lord. Thus anyone who practices *bhakti-yoga* is also a *prapanna*, or one who has surrendered.[13]

Yāmuna's declaration of surrender to the Lord in *The Jewel* recalls the way in which the Āḻvārs sought refuge. Yāmuna agonizes over worthlessness, his failure to "deserve" grace, and his professed lack of qualification to embark on any path to see the Lord. He seeks protection from the Lord, he says, because he is not qualified in *bhakti-yoga*, because he is not rooted in *dharma*, and because there is no refuge other than the Lord himself:

na dharma-niṣṭho 'smi na cātma-vedī
na bhaktimāṁs tvac-caraṇāravinde
akiñcano 'nanya-gatiḥ śaraṇya
tvat-pāda-mūlaṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye

> I am not steadfast in righteousness (*dharma*); I do not know my soul (*ātmā*); I have no *bhakti* to your lotus feet. I have nothing, and have no other refuge (*gati*). My protector (*śaraṇya*)! I take refuge at your feet.
>
> (*The Jewel* 22)

Yāmuna's words are filled with this sense of spiritual destitution and helplessness (*ākiñcanya*) and the conviction that the Lord is the only refuge and goal (*ananya-gatitva*). It is because of these sentiments that Yāmuna takes refuge at the feet of the Lord. We can understand Yāmuna's surrender by exploring the dimensions of the key terms *ākiñcanya* and *ananya-gatitva*.

The Lord as the Only Desired Goal

The Lord is the supreme refuge for Yāmuna, just as he was for the Āḻvārs. The Lord's supremacy is stated in a number of verses (*The Jewel* 10–14), and most of these have parallels in the Āḻvār poetry. Yāmuna celebrates the Lord's supremacy and compassion: he salutes him because he is supreme and because he is simultaneously accessible:

> O Lord, it is because you glance at them that the three worlds exist. . . . You are the friend of all creatures; is it surprising that you are [also] affectionate to those who take refuge in you?
>
> (*The Jewel* 10)

> I bow (*namaḥ*) before you, I salute you repeatedly, you who are the very ground of speech and mind. I salute you again and again, you who have infinite powers. I salute, I bow before, you who are an ocean of boundless mercy.
>
> (*The Jewel* 21)

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The first few lines of each verse glorify the transcendent supremacy of the Lord, but each verse ends with a description of his friendliness and his compassion (*dayā*). Yāmuna, like the Āḻvārs, makes it extremely clear that the Lord is the only refuge: even if he were to reject us, he says, we cannot find protection elsewhere. Yāmuna closely follows a verse of Kulacēkara Āḻvār in expressing these sentiments:

> My Lord of Vittuvakkōṭṭu,
> city surrounded by groves
> filled with fragrant blossoms,
>
> A mother may push away her infant in anger,
> and yet he thinks of her loving grace and weeps.
>
> You may not dispel my grief, [yet I say]
> There is no refuge other than your sacred feet.
>
> (Kulacēkara Āḻvār's *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 5.1)

O supreme Lord! You may reject me, but I will not leave your lotus feet, just as the child who suckles his mother's breast does not leave her even if she pushes him away.

(*The Jewel* 26)

In the verse immediately following the one just quoted, Yāmuna talks glowingly of the joy of devotion to the Lord:

> When my mind is fixed on lotus feet that shed nectar, how can I desire anything else? The bee does not even look at the [thorny] *ikṣuraka* flower when there is a lotus full of honey.
>
> (*The Jewel* 27)

Yāmuna is entranced by the Lord's exquisite beauty and composes several verses describing the divine form. He longs to see this Lord and have the Lord's divine feet adorn his head.

> O when shall I see your lotus feet,
> which are my treasure,
> which covered heaven and earth with playful ease, and
> which await anxiously for the moment when they can
> destroy the afflictions of those who bow before you?
> O Trivikrama! When will my head be adorned with your lotus feet, which have the marks of a conch, discus, wish-fulfilling tree, banner, lotus, goad, and thunderbolt?
>
> (*The Jewel* 30–31)

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Along with these petitions, there are several verses in which Yāmuna lists his professed inadequacies and declares his audacity in trying to see the Lord.

Yāmuna's Self-deprecation (Ākiñcanya)

Yāmuna also talks at length about his sinful nature, as some of the Āḻvārs did. He calls himself a shameless poet for attempting to sing of the Lord (*The Jewel* 7), almost echoing Periyāḻvār, who said, "My tongue is not pure; I should not utter your name; and yet my tongue speaks only of you" (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 5.1.1). In confessing his worthlessness and seeking the Lord's protection, Yāmuna follows the sentiments of the Āḻvārs who had sung:

> I was not born in the four clans,
> I have not learned the four good arts,[14]
> I have not conquered my senses,
> O pure Lord!
> I have no fortune;
> My Lord,
> I have nothing to grasp
> but your twin feet.
>
> (Tirumāḻicai Āḻvār's *Tiruccanta-viruttam* 90)

> I have not done any ritual,
> I have no intelligence,
> and yet
> I cannot move away from you and survive.
>
> O King of Cirīvaramaṅkalam,
> .....
> I am not a burden to you.
>
> (Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* 5.7.1)

Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār repeated these sentiments:

> O perfect Lord! I have not taken the [ritual] baths
> Or kept alive the three fires as befits a *brāhmaṇa;*
> I am not your *bhakta,* O sea-colored Lord!
> How can I be happy? I cry in distress.
> Embrace me and shower your grace upon me,
> O you who are in the great town of Araṅkam!
>
> I do not worship your golden feet all day,
> With faultless words
> I do not talk of your auspicious attributes,

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My heart is not tinged with love,
I [feel] nothing towards the Lord of Araṅkam.
Alas! Why was I born?
(Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār's *Tirumālai* 25–26)

In all these poems the Āḻvārs profess their unworthiness and seek the Lord's grace and his feet as refuge. We remember them when we read Yāmuna:

> O shame on me, an impure, immodest, cruel creature! With avarice I long, my Lord, to be your servant, a state that is beyond the reach of even the greatest of *yogīs*–Brahmā, Śiva, and Sanaka.
> (*The Jewel* 47)

> I have committed thousands of sins. I am helpless and come for refuge to your sacred feet. By your grace, make me yours.
> (*The Jewel* 48)

> Though I am lowly and beastly, the abode of enormous, inescapable sins without beginning, O ocean of compassion (*dayā-sindho*), O friend, O sea of boundless affection (*vātsalya*), I pray to you, for my fear vanishes when I think of your attributes.
> (*The Jewel* 58)

Filled with a sense of his own unworthiness, Yāmuna seeks refuge at the feet of the Lord. It is in this context that we read the words of surrender quoted earlier:

> I am not steadfast in righteousness; I do not know my soul; I have no *bhakti* to your lotus feet. I have nothing, and have no other refuge. My protector! I take refuge at at your feet.
> (*The Jewel* 22)

This verse becomes the classic paradigm of *prapatti* for later preceptors. The surrender has been precipitated by acute self-reproach, and Yāmuna seeks protection from the Lord. Still in the same mood of humility, Yāmuna offers to the Lord both himself and all he considers his. Immediately after the verse of submission, he, like Nammāḻvār, states that even this submission is not possible, as he has always belonged to the Lord:

> All that I am, whatever qualities I have, from this very day I offer at your lotus feet.
> O Lord, O Mādhava, whatever is mine, whatever I am—all are verily yours. When I am awakened to this knowledge what can I offer you?
> (*The Jewel* 52–53)[15]

These verses, which are so similar to Nammāḻvār's are, however, placed in a different context. Nammāḻvār offered himself to the Lord, but here the mood is

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one of overwhelming gratitude to the supreme person,[16] who has condescended to mingle with Yāmuna out of infinite grace and love:

> You mingled with my soul, and for that great help I rendered my soul to you. Can I ever retrieve it? You are the soul of my soul, O Lord who devoured the three worlds! Who is my soul? Who am I? You who gave have now claimed it again.
>
> (*Tvm* 2.3.4)

> You gave your feet as a refuge for me, and I have nothing to give you in return, for even my soul is yours.
>
> (*Tvm* 5.7.10)

Nammāḻvār's verses, which occur in the context of a union between the Lord and the poet, come after the Āḻvār expresses erotic longing in an earlier set of verses.[17] Yāmuna's submission, however, comes not after an erotic longing but after a confession of unworthiness, followed by a reflection on his relationship with the Lord: the Lord has awakened in him the knowledge of his *śeṣatva* (verse 54), which has impelled Yāmuna to acknowledge that he belongs completely to the Lord.

Bhakti as the Goal

Love and a desire for service overflow through the humility of Yāmuna. He pleads for grace so he can see the Lord, serve him, and have more *bhakti* toward him. Yāmuna has declared that he has no *bhakti*, and yet every line of *The Jewel* pulsates with love and a God-centeredness; he declares that he is like a bee hovering around a lotus. Like the Āḻvārs, he conceives of no happier destiny than to love and serve the Lord. If the serpent Ananta is a paradigm of a *śeṣa* (one who belongs entirely to and is a "property" of the Lord), Yāmuna too is a *śeṣa* whose sustenance is the grace of the Lord. Yāmuna is also a *prapanna*, one who has surrendered himself to the Lord and *whose goal is to have more devotion to the Lord:*

> O God, as you have [graciously] awakened within me this consciousness of being eternally yours, in a like manner do graciously give me that devotion which will enjoy nothing else but you.
>
> (*The Jewel* 54)

Bhakti here is the desired goal, an end in itself. The person who has the authority to practice *bhakti* (*bhakti-yogādhikārī*) sees *bhakti* as the way of constantly visualizing the Lord, and the one who has surrendered himself—the *prapanna*—craves for further *bhakti*.[18] The overflow of this overwhelming love is seen in a desire to serve the Lord. Yāmuna asks to render loving service to

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him (verse 46) and in praising the Lord he also describes the perfect servant, Ananta, the paradigmatic *śeṣa:*

> You are seated with Śrī on the great serpent, Ananta, who is the only seat of highest knowledge and strength in the celestial abode and who has been rightly designated as Śeṣa because he serves you in endless ways. His body assumes various forms, such as a residence, bed, seat, sandals, robes, pillow, and umbrella against rain and sun.
>
> (*The Jewel* 39–40)

Yāmuna's concept of the serpent-servant is based entirely on Poykai Āḻvār's verse:

> The serpent is an umbrella [for the Lord] when he moves, a throne when he sits, sandals when he stands, and a bed always in the large ocean. [The serpent] is a brilliant lamp, a soft stole, a cushion for his hand.
>
> (*Mutal Tiruvantāti* 53)

Yāmuna's goal is to serve the Lord like Śeṣa, and he requests the Lord's grace to help him achieve this goal.

In Quest of the Lord's Compassion

After surrendering himself, Yāmuna confesses his worthlessness and then pleads for grace on the very premise of being most unworthy. Because he is most unworthy of grace, he says, he is the one who needs it most:

> At last I have found you, my Lord. I have been sinking in this cycle of birth and death. . . . My Lord, you too have found an object most worthy of your compassion! Listen to my plea! This is the truth: . . . If you are not compassionate to me, my Lord, you will find it hard to find one so worthy of compassion! Without you, I am without my Lord; without me, you are without someone who is the best recipient of your compassion. Lord! Please keep up our relationship!
>
> (*The Jewel* 24, 50–51)

It is only through grace that the Lord can make Yāmuna his own (verse 48), and Yāmuna adds that it would be a stain on the Lord's honor if he does not save one who has sought his divine protection:

> What evil can befall me! I can stand anything, for afflictions have been born along with me. But, O Lord, the humiliation of those who have taken refuge in your presence will not befit you.
>
> (*The Jewel* 25)

Yāmuna's trust in the Lord's compassion is filled with confidence and hope.

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His petition for the Lord's grace seems to be based on four premises: (a) the eternal relationship that he believes all human beings have with the Lord; (b) his knowledge of earlier instances when the Lord saved those who sought his protection; (c) his connection with people whom he considers dear to the Lord—Nāthamuni, other devotees, and by implication, Śrī; and (d) his biological relationship to his grandfather, Nāthamuni.

Relationships Between Lord and Devotee

Yāmuna tells the Lord that the Lord is everything to him and that above all, he (Yāmuna) has sought refuge in him. This relationship cannot be denied, and Yāmuna believes that the Lord, to save his own honor, has to save one who has surrendered to him. The Lord, then, is like the king in classical Tamil poetry: ready to save anyone who surrenders his life to him.[19] Yāmuna also reminds the Lord of the other relationships that bind them:

> You are the father, you are the mother, you are as dear as a son, you alone are a loving friend, you are my companion. You are my teacher and the refuge of the world. I am yours, your servant, your associate; you are my way and refuge (*gati*); I have taken refuge in you. And so, I am only a burden to you.[20]
>
> (*The Jewel* 60)

The Āḻvārs had called the Lord their mother and father, and now Yāmuna repeats it with fresh assurance. His final argument is "I have taken refuge in you"—implying that even if the affection worthy of the other relationships is overlooked, the Lord is honor-bound to save one who seeks his protection. And this is nothing new, says Yāmuna, for, after all, the Lord has shown his grace in earlier instances.

The Paradigmatic Acts of Protection

Yāmuna, like the Āḻvārs, takes comfort in remembering earlier acts of protection and the Lord's responses even to those who sinned:

> O best among the Raghu [clan], you were kind to a [wicked] crow because it bowed before you.[21] O Kṛṣṇa, you granted liberation to the King of Cedi (Śiśupāla), though he had wronged you;[22] then tell me, is there any sin you cannot forgive?
>
> (*The Jewel* 63)

Just as the Āḻvārs frequently meditated on the various incidents of the Lord's protection and thus became filled with confidence, Yāmuna now seeks comfort from these incidents. He further reminds the Lord of his promise to save those who seek refuge in him:

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> Remember that promise of yours—that the refugee who will pray to you just once saying, "I am yours," will deserve your grace. Tell me, does this promise hold good for all others except me?
>
> (*The Jewel* 68)

This is Yāmuna's query to Viṣṇu, who, as Rāma, had proclaimed amnesty and protection for anyone who surrenders to him:

> If anyone who surrenders himself to me just once, saying, "I am yours," I award him fearlessness from then on. I shall protect him and all others; this I swear.[23]
>
> (*Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha-khaṇḍa* 18.33)

Yāmuna reminds the Lord of this promise and pleads for refuge.

Association with People Dear to the Lord

Yāmuna has written a brief Sanskrit hymn in praise of Śrī. This hymn consists of four verses and is therefore called *Catuḥ-ślokī* (*catuḥ* = "four"; *śloka* = "verse"), henceforth referred to as *Four Verses*. In this poem Yāmuna declares that he is her servant (*dāsa*) and has surrendered himself (*prapanna*) to her (*Four Verses* 2). Yāmuna also expresses reverence toward his teachers in the beginning of *The Jewel* and takes refuge in them. It is only after praising his preceptors and surrendering himself to them that Yāmuna submits himself to and takes refuge in Viṣṇu.

What are the implications of Yāmuna's surrender to Śrī and to his teachers? Later Śrī Vaiṣṇava commentators and theologians have understood Śrī and the *ācāryas* to be mediators between the Lord and the human being; i.e., only through their grace can one approach the Lord. We shall see whether the *stotras* themselves support this interpretation and also whether Yāmuna's surrender to Śrī and the *ācāryas* compromises his sole loyalty and "one-pointed" devotion to the Lord.

Four Verses is an independent work. We have no direct evidence by which to determine whether it was composed before or after *The Jewel*, though the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition understands it to be a prior work. M. Narasimhachari says that it "should be viewed as a prelude to the next work of Yāmuna, *viz.*, the *Stotraratna*, because it is as holding the vital position as Mediator of Divine Grace that Lakṣmī is praised as the Supreme in this hymn."[24] This may be implied, but it is never directly stated. Yāmuna glorifies her as a distinct person comparable in every way to her consort. In the second verse he declares that he is her servant and has sought refuge in her, and he says that he is singing about her because he knows of her compassion (*dayā*) for her subjects. But it must be noted that Yāmuna also calls the Lord an "ocean of compassion" (*dayaika-sindhave: The Jewel* 21); thus, for him compassion is not an exclusive quality of Śrī.

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Four Verses and *The Jewel* have strikingly different tones. In the former, Yāmuna speaks of Śrī's compassion with absolute confidence and sure knowledge:

> Even if your beloved consort is the Lord himself, he cannot comprehend your immeasurable, eternal, pleasing glory, which is like his own. To such a person as you [I say,] "O goddess (Īśvarī) of all the worlds! O beloved of the Lord of the earth! Knowing your compassion (*dayā*), I who am your servant (*dāsa*) and have sought refuge in you (*prapanna*) am going to praise you in a hymn.
>
> (*Four Verses* 2)

In *The Jewel,* on the other hand, Yāmuna agonizes over his lowliness:

> O shame on me, an impure, immodest, cruel creature! With avarice I long, my Lord, to be your servant, a state that is beyond the reach of even the greatest of *yogīs*–Brahmā, Śiva and Sanaka.
>
> (*The Jewel* 47)

In *Four Verses* Yāmuna declares himself to be a servant of Śrī; here he believes it wrong to have that hope. There he was confident of her compassion, but in *The Jewel* (7) he calls himself a "shameless poet" who is trying to praise the Lord and who craves the Lord's compassion. In reading the two works, we can see that the strong sense of self-condemnation in *The Jewel* is simply not there in *Four Verses*. Yāmuna seems confident of Śrī's grace, that she is more easily accessible than the Lord.

The first few verses of *The Jewel* are dedicated to Nāthamuni, the sage Parāśara, and a person described as being "adorned with *vakula* flowers." The commentators on the hymn have interpreted this person to be Nammāḻvār, who described himself as having *makiḻampū* (called *vakula* in Sanskrit) on his chest (*Tvm* 4.10.11). Nāthamuni was the grandfather and spiritual teacher of Yāmuna, and Parāśara was the legendary composer of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Parāśara and Nammāḻvār represent two devotees of Viṣṇu who composed passionate verses in Sanskrit and Tamil, respectively, in praise of Viṣṇu. Yāmuna praises them in *The Jewel,* the first extant work in Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sanskrit literature that begins with a formal praise of one's *ācārya* and then continues with glorification of the Lord.[25]

> I bow before the sage Nātha, who has incomprehensible, wonderful, and unstained wisdom (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*), and whose devotion (*bhakti*) to the Lord is like an unfathomable ocean.
> I bow to my master (*nātha*), the sage Nātha, who has attained the ultimate limit in the supremacy of knowledge and deepest love (*anurāga*) for the Lord and whose lotus feet are *my eternal refuge* in this world and the next.

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> I bow again to Nāthamuni, the foremost among ascetics (*yamī*); by his holy words—which stream forth from the boundless nectar ocean of devotion (*bhakti*) to and knowledge of Acyuta—*bhakti-yoga*, which gives one the highest goal, has descended on this earth.
>
> (*The Jewel* 1–3)

The laudatory verses on Nāthamuni and the proclamation of his feet as Yāmuna's refuge are followed by a reverential obeisance to Parāśara and then Nammāḻvār. The words Yāmuna uses to describe the importance of Nammāḻvār reflect the phrases that Maturakavi Āḻvār used to praise him. Maturakavi Āḻvār hailed Nammāḻvār as his mother, father, and master (*Kaṇṇinuṇ Ciṛuttāmpu* 4). Yāmuna uses the same phrases in Sanskrit to talk about the Āḻvār's relation to the community:

> I place my head before the holy feet of [Nammāḻvār], the master of our clan. Those feet, which are adorned with *vakula* flowers, are to me and my descendants for all time like mother, father, wives, sons, and great wealth.
>
> (*The Jewel* 5)

Yāmuna's words also recall some verses from the *Tiruvāymoḻi* in which Nammāḻvār says how dear the Lord is to him:

> Women with beautiful eyes,
> great wealth, good sons,
> father, and mother—
> Only he
> is all this, and more.
>
> (*Tvm* 5.1.8)

> You became
> father, mother, and children,
> and all other things.
>
> (*Tvm* 7.8.1)

Yāmuna's verses praising those whom he considers his teachers preface his hymn to the Lord, and later Śrī Vaiṣṇava teachers faithfully follow this pattern.

Yāmuna praises not only Śrī, Nāthamuni, and other teachers; he also glorifies other devotees. He longs to be born even as a miserable worm in the house of one who is devoted to Nārāyaṇa (*The Jewel* 55), and he ardently desires at least a glance from the *bhaktas* "who in their desire to see the Lord consider all other pleasures and liberation like mere straw" (56). The Lord cannot bear separation from his devotees even for a minute (56), so dear are they to him. He is also extremely affectionate to those who take refuge in him (10).

Yāmuna not only praises but seeks a relationship with Śrī, with teachers like Nāthamuni, Parāśara, and Nammāḻvār, and with his fellow devotees. There

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seem to be precedents for this in the literature of the *Vedas,* the *Purāṇas,* and the poetry of the Āḻvārs. Śrī is sought as a refuge in the *Śrī-sūkta* (an appendix to the *Ṛg Veda*), and hymns glorifying her occur in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa.*[26] The Āḻvārs do not sing directly to her; rather, as noted earlier, she is addressed in her role as the inseparable consort of the Lord.

Maturakavi Āḻvār took refuge at the feet of his teacher and praised him. The Āḻvārs glorified service and devotion to other *bhaktas;* in the first chapter we noted the earnest appeals of Nammāḻvār and Periyāḻvār to serve the other devotees. Here, too, Yāmuna has an immediate precedent.

The reasons for Yāmuna's glorification of Śrī, his teachers, and other devotees are rooted in his understanding of their relationships to the Lord. Yāmuna perceives Śrī as comparable in every way to the Lord, and yet the Lord is the source of her glory. In *The Jewel,* Yāmuna translates a Tamil phrase of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's—*tiruvukkum tiruvākkiya celvā* (*Periya Tirumoḻi* 7.7.1)—into Sanskrit in two places. Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's words mean "O precious one who is the auspiciousness of the goddess of auspiciousness," and Yāmuna says:

> Who else but you are the auspiciousness (*śrī*) of the goddess of auspiciousness (Śrī)?
>
> (*The Jewel* 12)

> You are the very auspiciousness of the goddess of auspiciousness.
>
> (*The Jewel* 45)

From these verses and others it is clear that, in Yāmuna's perception, Viṣṇu is superior to Śrī. He is also superior to the *ācāryas* and the devotees; nevertheless, they are extremely dear to him, even as he is to them. In the opening phrase of *Four Verses* Yāmuna hails Śrī as "you whose beloved is the most superior being" (*kāntas te puruṣottamaḥ*) and in the third verse he addresses her as "the beloved of the lotus-eyed [Lord]" (*aravinda-locana-manaḥ-kāntā*). Yāmuna has also indicated that the Lord cannot bear separation from his devotees, so dear are they to him. In this regard, Nāthamuni is also a very special *bhakta* for Yāmuna, who concludes *The Jewel* with the following verse:

> Remember my revered grandfather, Nāthamuni, who had the highest pure love (*prema*) for your lotus feet, O Lord, and, ignoring my unworthy conduct, show your grace (*prasāda*).
>
> (*The Jewel* 65)

Yāmuna takes refuge in Śrī and Nāthamuni and glorifies them and other devotees because they are all dear to the Lord, thus implying that the Lord, out of love for his devotees, may show his grace to Yāmuna. While Yāmuna desires to be associated with other devotees because they are dear to the Lord, and while he asks to be their servant, he nowhere directly states that they are mediators between Viṣṇu and the human being.

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Does the glorification of Śrī, Nāthamuni, and other *bhaktas,* then, compromise Yāmuna's loyalty to Nārāyaṇa? The answer would be in the negative because they are not independent deities competing for a share of his devotion to the Lord; rather, they increase his devotion and make his approach to the Lord easier by virtue of their close relationship with him.

Yāmuna's Relationship to Nāthamuni

After reminding the Lord of his relationships with human beings, his previous acts of protection, and his promise, Yāmuna now reminds him that he (Yāmuna) is the grandson of Viṣṇu's most ardent devotee, Nāthamuni. On the basis of this physical relationship, Yāmuna (in *The Jewel,* verse 65, quoted above) begs that the Lord be pleased with him and give him protection. Earlier Yāmuna professed that he was unworthy though born in a noble family:

> O one who gives protection (*śaraṇa-da*)! Though I was born in a good clan whose greatness is [recognized] by the world, whose members are pure and know the nature of reality (*tattva*) . . . and have minds that are directed only to your lotus feet, I, whose soul is filled with sins (*pāpātmā*), am sinking into darkness (*tamas*).
>
> (*The Jewel* 61)

The emphasis that Yāmuna places on his biological relationship with his grandfather has been noted by Neevel:

> Yāmuna's emphasis on his relationship with Nāthamuni is clearly distinctive. . . . I have not been able to discover any other hymn devoted primarily to a deity in which a human person or teacher is given as much attention nor in which such heavy explicit emphasis is placed upon one's hereditary biological relationship with one's spiritual master. While there is certainly no mutually exclusive relationship between an hereditary and spiritual relationship, I have not yet discovered a Śrī Vaiṣṇava hymn that puts such primary emphasis upon the former.
>
> Indeed, the Tamil Śrī Vaiṣṇava hymns of the Āḻvārs provide a very marked contrast. For . . . they place no emphasis upon the worth of their lineage and occasionally explicitly deprecate their family ties.[27]

While it is certainly true that no Śrī Vaiṣṇava prior to Nāthamuni emphasized his lineage *with such intensity,* it must be noted that some of the Āḻvārs, at least in rhetoric, did claim (and with some pride) that they hailed from a long line of servants of the Lord. I quote here from Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār and then Āṇṭāḷ:[28]

> Lord whose manifestations precede all thought!
> My father, his father, his father,
> and so on for seven generations
> have come to serve you;

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and we grieve that you, my Lord of Iṇṭalūr,
do not show your sacred form,
as it really is, to us.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 4.9.9)

My father, his father,
and further seven times more
were old servants of yours.
You have entered my heart
and I shall not let you go.
My dear life, my king!
My Lord who, without pausing,
gave me grace!
O perfect Lord who stands in Naṛaiyūr!

(*Peṛiya Tirumoḻi* 7.2.6)

Āṇṭāḷ (Kōtai) refers to herself as the daughter of the Lord Bhaṭṭar (i.e., Periyāḻvār), and the last lines of her *Tiruppāvai* are typical of her other "signature" verses:

Paṭṭar[29] Pirāṉ's Kōtai has composed
this garland of thirty verses in "Caṅkam Tamil."

(Āṇṭāḷ's *Tiruppāvai* 30)

Āṇṭāḷ repeats her father's name[30] in the last verse of every set of poems in the *Nācciyār Tirumoḻi*, with the exception of two.[31] Claiming descent from a line of the Lord's devotees, therefore, seems to have been a matter of some pride for the Āḻvārs, and however rhetorical the verses may be, I do not agree with Neevel's statement that "they place no emphasis upon the worth of their lineage and occasionally explicitly deprecate their family ties."[32] Family ties are only scorned when the relatives are perceived as leading godless lives, but not (as is evident from Āṇṭāḷ and Viṣṇucittaṉ/Periyāḻvār) when they are devotees of Viṣṇu. But Neevel is certainly quite correct in noting that no other [earlier] work places such emphasis on biological ties as *The Jewel*,[33] and also in his assessment that he "senses a certain conflicting pathos that marks Yāmuna's feeling of loss when he compares himself with his grandfather."[34]

It is Yāmuna's contrast of his lowliness with his grandfather's devotion that is unique, not his pride in his biological relationship with a *bhakta* of the Lord. In this connection I think it significant that Yāmuna should refer to two myths soon after mentioning that he has been born in a noble family:

O best among the Raghu [clan], you were kind to a [wicked] crow because it bowed before you. O Kṛṣṇa, you granted liberation to the King

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> of Cedi [Śiśupāla], though he had wronged you; then tell me, is there any sin you cannot forgive?
>
> (*The Jewel* 63)

It is curious that of all the instances of divine forgiveness Yāmuna could have mentioned, he chose these two. The crow-demon (Kākāsura) who attacked Sītā was the son of Indra, a divine devotee of Viṣṇu, whom Yāmuna had described earlier as "a drop of [Viṣṇu's] glory" (*The Jewel* 11). Śiśupāla, who insulted Kṛṣṇa in the *Mahābhārata,*[35] was his cousin and hence part of a noble line. In the *Mahābhārata,* the elderly Bhīṣma, after listening to Śiśupāla insult Kṛṣṇa, calls him the "defiler of his line."[36] So although both the crow-demon and Śiśupāla hail from noble families, one being the son of Viṣṇu's devotee and the other Kṛṣṇa's cousin, they are sinful and yet forgiven. It is against this background, then, that we may understand Yāmuna's words of sorrow—that though he was born in a noble family, he is sinking into darkness. And then comes the plea for grace:

> Remember my revered grandfather, Nāthamuni, who had the highest pure love for your lotus feet, O Lord, and, ignoring my unworthy conduct, show your grace.
>
> (*The Jewel* 65)

The mythic paradigms are now made personal: Nāthamuni loved the Lord, and the Lord cannot be separated from those who love him; since Yāmuna "belongs" to Nāthamuni, Viṣṇu must love Yāmuna too.[37]

We may also consider whether Yāmuna's stress on his biological ties to his grandfather was informed by Pāñcarātric notions. Some late Pāñcarātric texts tend to emphasize the value of biological/spiritual ties, based on the notions of *gotra* and certain *vaṁśas*. Daniel Smith quotes a relevant passage from the *Śeṣa-saṁhitā* and asks the reader to note that "in this śloka . . . in addition to being limited to people who are born in 'my family,' the narrator restricts the Pāñcarātra-teachings to those who are gentle, . . . "[38] Later Professor Smith talks about "the sages [who] ask the Lord about the lineage of those who are acceptable to worship Him;" the Lord's answer restricts the authority to families born in five *gotras*.[39] (In another work he says four). In any event, seeking the Lord's grace through biological ties becomes a prominent feature of later Śrī Vaiṣṇava thinking. Thus the Lord, who is accessible only through *bhakti-yoga,* as stated in the *Gītārtha-saṅgraha,* is asked to become the protector of Yāmuna, who claims he is incapable of practicing *bhakti-yoga*. Viṣṇu is asked to become the protector and refuge because of his relationship to all human beings, because he has saved those in distress before, because of Yāmuna's association with Śrī and other *bhaktas,* and because of Yāmuna's relationship to Nāthamuni. Nowhere do we get the impression that Yāmuna is practicing the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* described in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha*. For our study of

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devotion in the early Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, it is extremely significant that the first major teacher (*ācārya*) of the tradition whose works are extant shows no indication of practicing a discipline he praises so highly.[40] The seminal importance of Yāmuna in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava and other Indian religious traditions is best described by Neevel:

> One of the reasons . . . that Yāmuna is such a fascinating figure to study is that he represents a "revolutionary" integration of a number of developments that were taking place within Indian religion during the second half of the first millennium C.E. It was during this period that popular Bhakti movements using such vernaculars as Tamil and such Tāntric traditions as Pāñcarātra first rose into prominence. It was also during this period that Vedānta . . . first assumed a place of major importance. . . .
>
> . . . Yāmuna represents those within the Vedic tradition who were in search of a new, independent self-understanding that would be both faithful to their ancient heritage and responsive to the religious life of the day, particularly to the popular Bhakti and Tāntric movements [that were] becoming one of the most dominating and vital forces within Indian life.[41]

Yāmuna's integration of concepts and language from *Pāñcarātra*, epic, and Purāṇic literature, and Āḻvār poetry becomes characteristic of Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature as a whole. Rāmānuja explicitly acknowledged the importance of Yāmuna, and we shall see how Rāmānuja follows the main teachings of Yāmuna in his own works.

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3

Rāmānuja: Theologian and Devotee

Rāmānuja is the most important *ācārya* of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. He is known as Emperumāṇār ("our great one"), and his followers say that this title was given to him by the Lord at Śrī-raṅgam. The philosophy of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas became known as *emperumāṇār darśanam* ("the vision/philosophy of Rāmānuja"). He is also known as The Creator of the Commentary (Bhāṣyakāra); after his interpretation of the *Brahma-sūtras*, no other Śrī Vaiṣṇava wrote a direct commentary on them.[1] In his larger writings he sets forth his understanding of *bhakti-yoga* as the scripturally approved way of attaining a continuous vision ("remembrance") of the Lord and procuring divine grace. However, in his devotional hymns Rāmānuja confesses that he is unable to practice the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* and instead seeks refuge in the Lord.

In this chapter we shall discuss Rāmānuja's understanding of *bhakti-yoga*, in which the great teacher follows Yāmuna in all the crucial points, and then consider his confession of surrender in the devotional hymns. In this connection we shall also examine the allegations that question Rāmānuja's authorship of the hymns. These hymns are unique in certain ways, and in other ways they are similar to the mood and texture of Yāmuna's *The Jewel*, which echoed several Āḻvār poems. In discussing Rāmānuja's portrayal of *bhakti-yoga* and his fervent devotion in the hymns, we shall notice the twin strands of Tamil and Sanskrit literatures.

Studies of the period in which Rāmānuja lived frequently focus just on his philosophical works,[2] ignoring the works written by his close associates. Kūrattāḻvāṉ, Rāmānuja's disciple and scribe, wrote several Sanskrit *stotras* (panegyrics) very similar to Yāmuna's *The Jewel*. Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ, Rāmānuja's cousin, wrote the earliest Maṇipravāḷa commentary on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*. These works have won recognition only within the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community and are largely neglected by other scholars. Rāmānuja's thought has either been studied alone, isolated from the rich devotional milieu of which it was a part, or interpreted in light of the thirteenth-century theologians. In this and the next two chapters we shall not only examine Rāmānuja's works but also see how certain of his ideas, themes, and sentiments were shared by his friends and disciples.

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Rāmānuja writes essentially for a pan-Indian audience; he sets himself the task of refuting the philosophy of Śaṅkara and his followers and establishing what he holds to be the correct interpretation of scripture. Since he is speaking to a wide audience of intellectuals, Rāmānuja writes in the medium of Sanskrit and uses only those proof texts that his opponents also accept. Rāmānuja is therefore extremely fastidious in his choice of quotations from scripture; his most notable omission (despite his defense of them) is the *Pāñcarātra* texts. Rāmānuja *does* quote them, but only in the sections of the *Śrī-bhāṣya* where he is directly defending the validity and authority of the *Pāñcarātra* literature.[3]

The style of Rāmānuja's philosophical works—the *Śrī-bhāṣya*, the *Gītā-bhāṣya*, the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*, etc.—is formal and conservative in tone, but the devotional hymns (*Gadyas*) are emotional. Here and in the panegyrics of Kūrattāḻvāṉ the authors speak to the Lord, glorifying and eulogizing him in superlatives. These works were meant for the edification and enjoyment of "the family," as it were—those Śrī Vaiṣṇavas who understood and shared such devotion. They were not for the rival scholars who had to be convinced and converted; the poetic hyperboles that we see in these paeans of praise would not be misinterpreted by those who participated in the shared context of *bhakti* literature. Rāmānuja, in his larger writings, portrays *bhakti-yoga* as a discipline in which the devotee constantly struggles to sustain a continuous vision of the Lord. But in his hymns we frequently encounter the devotee directly envisaging the Lord enshrined in a temple. The hymns contain statements of the poet's unworthiness of, as well as confidence in, the Lord's salvific grace. We turn now to a discussion first of Rāmānuja's portrayal of *bhakti-yoga* and then of his surrender in the *Gadyas*.

Bhakti-yoga in Rāmānuja's Larger Writings

In the *Gītā-bhāṣya* (henceforth abbreviated *Gb*) Rāmānuja defines *bhakti-yoga* as continuous meditation accompanied by love (*sneha-pūrvam anudhyānaṁ bhaktir ity abhidhīyate*)[4]. In the *laghu-siddhānta* of the *Śrī-bhāṣya* he elucidates on this notion of meditation (*dhyāna*). He states that meditation really means a steady and continuous remembrance (*dhruvānusmṛti*), uninterrupted like the flow of oil. This meditation has the character of "seeing," or "intuition." The remembrance is really like a continuous vision (*smṛti-darśana-rūpa*), and there is a sense of direct perception or "immediate presentation" (*sākṣāt-kāra*). The person who has this remembrance is chosen or favored by the Lord ("highest Self"), and by him the highest Self is gained. Steady remembrance of this kind is designated by the word *bhakti* (devotion), and this word has the same meaning as *upāsanā* (meditation).[5]

One can attain this steady remembrance only by following a strict discipline. Rāmānuja, quoting the Vākya-kāra,[6] says that steady remembrance (medita-

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tion) is obtained through abstention (*viveka*), freeness of mind (*vimoka*), repetition (*abhyāsa*), works (*kriyā*), virtuous conduct (*kalyāṇa*), freedom from dejection (*anavasāda*), and absence of exultation (*anuddharṣa*). "Abstention" (*viveka*) means keeping the body clean from all impure food; "freeness of mind" (*vimoka*) is the absence of attachment to objects of desire; "works" (*kriyā*) indicate the performance, according to one's ability, of the five great sacrifices; "virtuous conduct" includes truthfulness, honesty, kindness, liberality, gentleness, and absence of covetousness; "freedom from dejection" is the absence of the lowness of spirit, or want of cheerfulness, that results from unfavorable conditions of place or time, and also from remembering causes of sorrow; exultation is the satisfaction of mind that springs from circumstances opposite to those just mentioned, and its contrary is "absence of exultation." Too much satisfaction is also said to stand in the way of meditation.[7]

The Lord is attained by intense love. The devotee always remembers the divine names and seeks to worship and serve the Lord with joy. In his commentary on *Gītā* 9.14, Rāmānuja says that those devotees who desire eternal union with the Lord, who want to serve him with all their heart and soul, and who worship the Lord because he is exceedingly dear to them are unable to sustain themselves even for a split second without singing his praises. They constantly try to serve him and bow down in front of him. They remember and chant the divine names, which express particular divine attributes, and their voices are low and indistinct with joy. They try to work for the Lord by worshiping him and by building temples and gardens. The eight organs—the mind, intellect, ego, two feet, two hands, and head—are bent low with the weight of loving devotion; they prostrate themselves on the very earth like a stick falling down.[8]

This activity is combined with a meditation on the Lord, a meditation filled with love and the realization that one is owned by, and is the *śeṣa*[9] of, the Lord. Rāmānuja emphasizes love of the Lord and knowledge of the *śeṣa-śeṣī* relationship, both of which constitute a large part of *bhakti:*

> Thus the supreme Brahman is the ocean of infinite and unsurpassed excellences of attributes. He transcends all evil. The expanse of his glory is boundless. He abounds in surpassing condescension, maternal compassion and supreme beauty. He is the principal entity (*śeṣin*). The individual self is subservient to him. If a seeker meditates on the Supreme with a full consciousness of this relationship (between the Lord and himself) as the principal entity and subsidiary entity, and if the supreme Brahman so meditated upon becomes an object of supreme love to the devotee, then he himself effectuates the devotee's god-realization.[10]

This *bhakti-yoga* is attained by a synthesis of *karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*. Dr. van Buitenen, in his study of the *Gītā-bhāṣya*, writes that Rāmānuja portrays *jñāna-yoga* as an advanced stage of *karma-yoga*. He says that from Rā-

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mānuja's point of view *karma-yoga* has two aspects: knowledge and action. This knowledge is initially the mediate, more or less abstract knowledge of the soul. Knowledge is acted upon, and gradually selfish action becomes disinterested action. Eventually, after a long process that may take several lives,

> knowledge and action interact more directly; knowledge, becoming more and more integrated in action, is concretized, action is spiritualized and interiorized, until at last both culminate in Yoga where the ātman is recognized, karma-yoga terminates in jñāna-yoga and the mediate, abstract knowledge is completely concretized in immediate intuitive perception (sākṣātkāra).[11]

This experience of the soul is followed by the attainment of the Lord himself.

Bhakti is engendered and nourished by knowledge of the omnipotence of God. In other words, knowledge of his complete supremacy removes obstacles to *bhakti*.[12] That this knowledge is stressed seems to imply that knowledge of God's sovereignty is so powerful that it overwhelms a person and convinces him of his own finitude on the one hand and God's power on the other. Assured of the omnipotence of God, human beings may turn to him—with humility, love, service, and faith.

But it is not merely with humility and worshipful reverence that one turns to the divine power; a strong element of love is overwhelmingly discernible. Apparently for Rāmānuja the two facets complement each other, for he is committed to look upon the Lord as a powerful sovereign on the one hand and a loving, merciful father on the other. The Lord is the sovereign, the support, the king, and an exalted person who has a right to be served. But he also inspires service, being a gracious person to whom "all creatures, existing in all three states of time (past, present and future) are objects of loving concern" (*Gb* 7.26).[13] In the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*, Arjuna is given a vision of the Lord's supreme and awesome form, which precipitates Arjuna's humility. But it is to the Lord as father, accessible friend, and lover that Arjuna addresses his appeal for grace:

> Because you are the father of all, the most worthy of respect, the preceptor and greater than all others by virtue of qualities like compassion, therefore, bowing down and prostrating the body, I beg of you who are the praiseworthy Lord: as a father and a friend show grace to a son who has offended, and as a friend who is entreated with prostration . . . even so bear with me, who am your beloved.
>
> (*Gb* 11.44)

To give rise to this humility, love, devotion, and faith, the Lord makes himself an accessible refuge:

> In order to be a refuge for gods, men, and other creatures, the supreme person, without at all abandoning his very own nature, associates him-

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> self with the characteristic form, structure, qualities, and actions of the different classes of beings, and then he is born in many ways.
>
> (*Śrī-bhāṣya* 1.3.1)

The *Gītā-bhāṣya* affirms this:

> Because of supreme compassion (*parama-kāruṇya*), and because of love for my devotees (*āśrita-vātsalya*), and to become a refuge for all, I have descended as the son of Vasudeva without leaving my inherent nature.
>
> (*Gb* 7.24)

> I have assumed a human form so that I may become the refuge of all.
>
> (*Gb* 7.25)

> I have assumed a humanlike form out of my exceeding compassion, so that men can resort to me easily.
>
> (*Gb* 9.11)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ, the scribe and associate of Rāmānuja, emphasizes this point:

> If you had not been born in divine and human wombs . . . we could not have known from any other source that we could take refuge in you.[14]

All actions are to be dedicated to the Lord, for he is absolute, the owner, the *śeṣī* (*Gb* 9.27). One's heart is to be fixed on him; one is to worship him, bend before and give oneself up to him, for, again, he is both the sole cause—the supreme Brahman—and the ocean of compassion and affection (*Gb* 9.34). As argued earlier, Rāmānuja's commitment to seeing the Lord as both the supreme sovereign and a beloved father gives rise to simultaneous moods of service and love in the *bhakta*. The two divine attributes of power and compassion seem to precipitate the faith, the confidence, the trust of the human being in the saving power of God and accelerate his complete surrender.

Prapatti—to resort to the Lord and seek him as a refuge—is seen as an integral part of *bhakti-yoga*. Out of intense love, the devotee seeks the Lord as a refuge (*Gb* 7.1), and this self-surrender is necessary for *bhakti-yoga* (*Gb* 7.15).

Even if a *prapanna* surrenders to other gods, the Lord still increases his faith (*śraddhā*), because the minor deities actually form the body (*śarīra*) of the Lord (*Gb* 7.21). The Lord himself engenders in the devotee the desire to worship with faith (*śraddhā*) any deity that he may choose. This implies that the desire itself is of extreme importance: only then is unshakeable, firm faith given (*Gb* 7.21). But the glory of the devotees who surrender themselves to other gods is short-lived: when the gods "fall," the devotees fall too (*Gb* 7.23).

Every devotee must take refuge in the Lord to realize his goals. The *Gītā* mentions four categories of aspirants; two (the *ārta* and the *arthārthī*) who crave wealth; the *jijñāsu*, who aspires for *kaivalya*;[15] and the *jñānī*, the highest of all

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devotees (*Gītā* and *Gb* 7.16). Again, in *Gb* 7.28 and 14.27, Rāmānuja paraphrases the Lord as saying that the devotee must take refuge in him even to attain the goal of *kaivalya*.[16] Seeking the Lord as a refuge is absolutely necessary to attain wealth or the isolated happiness of *kaivalya*. In this connection we may note that Piḷḷāṉ, Rāmānuja's cousin, repeats these sentiments and says that it is necessary to seek the Lord as a refuge even for such goals as attaining wealth, a temporary release in the celestial worlds (*svarga*), or governing a country properly:

> Even if one is generous and is steeped in *kṣatriya-dharma,* involved in the matters of the state, one cannot keep hold of the country unless he takes refuge in the Lord. . . . Unless one takes shelter (*āśraya*) in the Lord, neither *svarga* nor wealth (*aiśvarya*) can be achieved.[17]

Rāmānuja attributes the differences in the types of people who resort to the Lord to the differences in their *karma* (*Gb* 7.16), and he says that the evil deeds of a human being are the reason why he may not seek the Lord as a refuge (*Gb* 7.15).

Elsewhere (*Gb* 16.19–20), while describing the people of demoniac nature, who hate god, the Lord says that he throws them into bodies that are inimical to him. Piḷḷāṉ handles the same question:

> Why is it that everyone does not recognize him—him who has [such auspicious] qualities—and seek him as a refuge (*āśraya*)? It is because he makes those who have no friendship (*sneha*) toward him deluded, and so many cannot realize him in his real nature.[18]

Rāmānuja emphasizes an individual's previous *karma,* and later the demoniac soul's hatred for the Lord. Piḷḷāṉ follows the second emphasis of Rāmānuja in pointing out why some seek refuge in the Lord and others do not, but for Piḷḷāṉ the determining factor is the friendship/love that one may have for the Lord.

It is only by seeking refuge in the Lord that one can attain his clear grace (*prasāda*), through which one attains supreme peace and the eternal abode (*Gb* 18.62). In the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha,* Rāmānuja says that by surrendering at the feet of the Lord one gets an inclination to turn toward him,[19] and that surrendering to the Lord for his own sake is the very best goal:

> Among them the wise one (*jñānī*) is the best. Why? [Because] he is always attached [to me] and is single-minded in [his] devotion. For the *jñānī,* to whom I am the sole object of attainment, connection with me is eternal. But others meditate on me only until they fulfill their desires. In the case of others there is devotion to the object of their desires and to me as the means of attainment, but the *jñānī* is devoted to me alone. Therefore, the *jñānī* is the best [devotee].

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> Further, I am indeed inexpressibly dear to the *jñānī*. . . . The *jñānī* is [my] very self. I regard myself as depending on him for my support and sustenance. Why is this so? Because this man holds me to be the highest goal, finding it impossible to support himself without me; therefore it is also not possible for me to maintain myself without him. Thus he is indeed myself.
>
> (*Gb* 7.17–18)

Such a devotee is extremely dear to the Lord. The Lord cannot stand to be separated from him and showers his favor on him so that the devotee can attain him quickly:

> I am easy to attain by that *yogī* who is ever united with me, that is, who desires eternal union with me; who remembers me, having nothing else in mind, continuously that is, [without interruption] from the time the work [of meditation] was started; . . . who, on account of my being exceedingly dear to him, is unable to obtain support and sustenance for himself without remembering me, and who indulges in memories [of me] which are exceedingly dear to him. I alone am the object of attainment [to such a *yogī*] not . . . sovereign power and enjoyment. And I am very easily attained [by him].
>
> Unable to stand the separation [from him] I myself want him. The meaning is that I myself give him that progress in his worship which is required for attaining me, and I destroy all obstacles between us. I awake in him the condition of my being extremely dear to him . . .
>
> (*Gb* 8.14)

The *jñānī* is looked upon not only as the very soul of the Lord, but almost as if he were superior to the Lord:

> Those who worship Me out of intense love because they cannot sustain their souls without worshiping Me . . . whether they are born in a high caste or a low caste, exist within my very self and are provided with every happiness as though their qualities were equal to Mine. "I, too, am in them" means "I treat them as if [*iva*] they were My superiors."
>
> (*Gb* 9.29)[20]

To the supreme aspirant, *bhakti* is an *end* in itself. *Bhakti-yoga* has been mentioned as a way (*upāya*) for attaining the Lord, but at the highest stage this *bhakti-yoga* is declared to be an end in itself:

> Bhakti is that particular kind of knowledge, which is a state that elicits absolute love towards itself, which is an end in itself, and [which] eliminates the desire for everything else. One blessed with such bhakti attains the fitness to be chosen by the supreme Self. By him is the Supreme attained. This is the significance of the śruti under discussion.

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> This particular kind of knowledge of the nature of the highest bhakti, is brought about only by [the] bhakti yoga already delineated, which grows by continuous practice, and is assisted by karma, which follows jñāna.[21]

Again, in paraphrasing the condition of one who has realized the state of Brahman (*Gb* 18.54), Rāmānuja says that it is marked by realization that one's soul contains infinite knowledge and that it is utterly dependent on and subservient to the Lord. Such a person looks upon everything else as straw. We may recall that Yāmuna used the same analogy (*The Jewel* 56) and described the *bhakta* as one who considers everything but the vision of the Lord to be straw. This devotee attains supreme devotion (*mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*).[22] *Bhakti* is an end, the supreme goal.

For the devotee who has dedicated himself entirely to the Lord, the Lord is an ocean of parental love (*āśrita-vātsalya*). We repeatedly see Rāmānuja asserting that the Lord will shower grace on those who have devotion toward him.

Through incessant devotion to God and single-pointed love for him, the *bhakta* becomes the object of God's love (*Gb* 8, introduction). The Lord is easy [to approach and obtain] for the devotee who constantly and lovingly meditates on him (*Gb* 8.14). The Lord grants the desires of one who devoutly meditates on him, desiring union (*Gb* 9.22). Out of compassion (*anugraha*) alone, he dispels the ignorance that is born out of the devotee's old *karma* and which is antagonistic to the *bhakta's* wisdom (*Gb* 10.11). For those whose thoughts are centered on him, who consign all their acts to him and contemplate him with devotion and worship, he becomes the savior and delivers them from the ocean of *saṁsāra* (*Gb* 18.57–58). In fact, the Lord pledges liberation to the *bhaktas:*

> Being thus, you will directly attain me. I solemnly assure you that this is true. That is, I give you the solemn assurance. It is not intended merely to rouse your interest. For you are dear to me. It has already been declared, "For I am inexpressibly dear to the man of wisdom and he too is dear to me" (*Gb* 7.17). In regard to him whose love for me is very great, my love for him also becomes very great. Therefore, unable to bear separation from him, I cause him to attain me. Hence what has been solemnly assured to the effect "You will straightaway attain me," is true indeed.
>
> (*Gb* 18.65)

The Lord pledges that he will destroy the sins a *bhakta* may have committed if the *bhakta* only surrenders himself to him:

> Giving up all *dharmas,* take refuge in me alone; I shall save you from all sins, do not grieve.
>
> (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

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This is the famous verse in the *Gītā* that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community understands to be the Lord's last word (*caramaṃ-śloka*) on the matter of salvation. Rāmānuja interprets this verse in two ways: First, he suggests the Lord is saying that by *dharma* one ought to renounce the fruits of *jñāna-*, *karma-*, and *bhakti-yoga,* and by this one's sins will be destroyed. The alternative interpretation is that if an aspirant renounces expiatory activities that are difficult to perform and takes refuge in the Lord alone, he will be rescued from his sins. Thus Rāmānuja's understanding of *bhakti* in the *Gītā-bhāṣya* includes *prapatti,* or committing oneself completely to the Lord.

The overall impact of this emphasis on man's having to deserve salvation is strong. And yet there is an implicit understanding that the Lord is not only a father and companion whom one loves, but also the *śeṣī* (owner, master) to whom one owes one's very existence. The Lord is the generator of all activity, the inner, omnipotent controller. Human actions and even the capacity to act are dependent on the Lord, says Rāmānuja, and he quotes scripture (*Brahma-sūtra* 2.3.33) in support (*Gb* 18.15). While describing *tyāga* (renunciation), Rāmānuja says that its basis lies in renouncing the agency of the works performed, in attributing all action to the supreme person (*Gb* 18.4).

A deep commitment to scripture necessitates that Rāmānuja affirm the law of *karma* and confirm that man should *choose* to be devoted to God. He insists that when sins inherited from past ages are exhausted, men worship and take shelter under the Lord (*Gb* 7.28). It takes many meritorious births before one knows that he is a *śeṣa* of Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu) and that his acts and existence are dependent on him (*Gb* 7.19). However, Rāmānuja's understanding of *bhakti* and God's sovereignty lead him to assume that nothing can take place, not even the initial impetus to desire faith, without God's initiation. Rāmānuja accepts both scripture and experience: free will and *karma,* as proclaimed by scripture, are important, and so are the supreme sovereignty and totally unconditioned nature of God's grace, which is felt in every moment of devotion. Rāmānuja affirms God's justice explicitly: God is not merciless, and the apparent inequities of creation are ascribed to *karma,* which is beginningless (*Gb* 9.9). Creation is unequal because of the inequality of *karma* among human beings. In a sense, the doctrine of *karma* itself is a limited kind of predestination. If *bhakti-yoga,* the only way to liberation, is the prerogative of the upper three classes, then the lower classes are doomed not to attain liberation in this lifetime.

But this is not, and in fact cannot be, the last word of someone who honored the Āḻvārs and revered Yāmuna. What we have discussed is just one aspect of Rāmānuja's thought, one side of the twin Vedānta that is the Śrī Vaiṣṇava heritage. In his *Gadyas* we see a powerful appeal for grace and service. Here Rāmānuja claims that since he has not performed *bhakti-*, *karma-*, or *jñāna-yoga,* his only hope is the Lord's grace.

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The Gadya-traya

Rāmānuja has written only in Sanskrit and his authorship of the three *Gadyas* has been questioned on the basis of a perceived discrepancy between his longer writings, which portray *bhakti-yoga* as the way to obtain the Lord, and the *Gadyas*, which show *śaraṇāgati* as the only *upāya*. The arguments to this effect, advanced by Robert Lester, have been accepted by Julius Lipner in *The Face of Truth*. Dr. Lester enumerates other apparent discrepancies between the philosophical works and the *Gadyas*, notably the position of Śrī, the distinctive use of the Sanskrit phrase *para-bhakti-para-jñāna-parama-bhakti*, and the concept of eternal loving service (*nitya-kaiṅkarya*).[23]

Lester's arguments seem to be based on the following premises:

1. There are discrepancies between the notions of *śaraṇāgati* in the two sets of writings: (a) The philosophical writings of Rāmānuja advocate *bhakti-yoga* as the only way to reach the Lord, and *śaraṇāgati* is seen as ancillary to *bhakti-yoga*.[24] In the *Śaraṇagati-gadya*, however, surrender to the Lord and a mantric substitute, i.e., the recital of the *dvaya-mantra*, is portrayed as a sufficient condition to get one to the supreme state. (b) The devotee of the *Gadya* is "helpless," whereas this is not seen in Rāmānuja's paraphrase of *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.62.[25]

The answer to this challenge, I believe, lies in taking seriously two points: (a) Rāmānuja's acceptance of the *Pāñcarātra* literature and its contents, and (b) the fundamental assertion of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition: that it follows an Ubhaya-vedānta, or twin Vedānta based on the Sanskrit *Vedas* and the Tamil writings of the Āḻvārs.

Śaraṇāgati, when closely linked with a ritual and *mantras*, is essentially a Pāñcarātric notion,[26] and Rāmānuja has explicitly defended Pāñcarātric literature in his *Śrī-bhāṣya* (2.2.42–43). Rāmānuja clearly sees the Pāñcarātric literature as a study-aid to the *Vedas* and as the word of God.[27] Rāmānuja also accepts and quotes from the *Parama-saṁhitā*, the *Pauṣkara-saṁhitā*, and the *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* while commenting on the *sūtras* of *Vedānta* just mentioned.[28] H. Daniel Smith has described the *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* as focusing primarily on the importance of *mantras*, and the rituals associated with *prapatti* have been described in at least *one* early *Pāñcarātra* text, the *Jayākhya-saṁhitā*.[29] So there is no discrepancy in Rāmānuja's following a *śaraṇāgati* closely linked with *mantra*.

Dr. Lester sees the *śaraṇāgati* portrayed in the *Gadyas* as characterized by the devotee's helplessness. This kind of helplessness and unworthiness—what Yāmuna referred to as *ākiñcanya*—is encountered in the poetry of the Āḻvārs and in Yāmuna's *The Jewel*. We have already seen some of the stylistic and thematic similarities between the Āḻvār poetry and *The Jewel*. Yāmuna also uses the word *śaraṇāgata*, or "one who has surrendered himself to the Lord" in verse 48, and he uses the word to describe himself in verse 25. Professor Lester

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accepts Rāmānuja's connection with Yāmuna,[30] and as far as I know, Yāmuna so emphatically declares his identity in the *The Jewel* that no one has questioned its authorship.[31] Rāmānuja's acquaintance with Yāmuna's words of self-deprecation in *The Jewel* may be presumed. We may, at this point, note the evidence in Śrī Vaiṣṇava hagiography that attests to Rāmānuja's connection with the Tamil Āḻvār poetry. This bears testimony to his roots in sectarian Vaiṣṇavism.

Rāmānuja never wrote in Tamil or referred to the Āḻvārs in his formal writings. Nevertheless, the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition has maintained that he learned the *Tiruvāymoḻi* from one of Yāmuna's disciples, Tirumālai Āṇṭāṉ, and also volunteered interpretations of some verses perceived to be at variance with Yāmuna's understanding. The thirteenth-century hagiography *The Splendor* says that with the permission of Rāmānuja, his cousin Piḷḷāṉ wrote the first commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, the *Īṭu-muppatt-āṛāyirappaṭi*.[32] This, the longest extant commentary on the *Tvm*, was composed in the thirteenth century and records the interpretations of several *ācāryas*, including Rāmānuja. It includes several stories connecting the verse with Rāmānuja or an incident involving him. Since these comments testify to Rāmānuja's involvement with the songs of the Āḻvārs, they have been noted in Appendix 4.

Tiruvaraṅkattu Amutaṉār, who composed what is probably the earliest work in praise of Rāmānuja, describes him in the very first verse as one who was at the feet of Māraṉ (i.e., Nammāḻvār; *Irāmānuca Nūṟṟantāti* 1). Taken together, the evidence seems to firmly place Rāmānuja in the Āḻvār and Pāñcarātric tradition, for it is highly improbable that the early *ācāryas* would fabricate hundreds of incidents associating Rāmānuja with the *Tiruvāymoḻi* and the Āḻvārs and indulge in a carefully plotted conspiracy to draft him into the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. Dr. Lester's query in the conclusion of his last paper on this subject—"Is it that 'Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism' adopts Rāmānuja?"[33]—cannot, I submit, be accepted, in light of the overwhelming documentation that the tradition has to the contrary. The *Pāñcarātra* and Āḻvār influences on Rāmānuja's thought have to be taken seriously if we are to understand an *ācārya* who was not just a great theologian and interpreter of the Vedic tradition but also a devotee who worshiped regularly at the temples of Kāñcipuram, Śrī-raṅgam, Tirupati, etc., and participated in the devotional milieu informed by the ecstatic Tamil hymns and sectarian rituals.

2. Professor Lester admits that Rāmānuja mentions Śrī and "does say enough about her to warrant the general description given in the *Gadya*," but adds that "he nowhere indicates that she is to be the object of worship, much less that she is mediatrix between the devotee and Nārāyaṇa."[34]

A prayer to Śrī is at the beginning of the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*. Rāmānuja surrenders to Śrī but does not call her a mediatrix. To the best of my knowledge, that term, *puruṣakāra*, is used for the first time in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition by Rāmānuja's cousin Piḷḷāṉ. Rāmānuja's surrender to and glorification of Śrī seem similar to Yāmuna's expressions in *Four Verses*. The only difference I

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note is that in *Four Verses* Yāmuna calls himself a *prapanna*, or one who has already surrendered himself to Śrī, and in the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* we witness Rāmānuja in the act of surrendering. In *Four Verses* Yāmuna hails Śrī as the beloved of the Lord, and in the *Gadya* Rāmānuja describes her nature and qualities as being appropriate for and pleasing to the Lord. Rāmānuja asks Śrī to bless his surrender to the Lord; thus the mediating aspect of Śrī is implied in the *Gadyas* as it was in *Four Verses*.

Rāmānuja's descriptions and petitions are also very similar to those in a hymn written by his scribe and disciple, Kūrattāḻvāṉ. The *Four Verses* of Yāmuna, the first two verses of the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, and the *Hymn to Śrī* (*Śrī-stava*) of Kūrattāḻvāṉ are quite similar in tone and sentiment, which were echoed in later hymns on Śrī composed by those within the community. These include the *Śrī-guṇa-ratna-kośa* of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar and the *Śrī-stuti* of Vedānta Deśika in the thirteenth century. The Sanskrit *stotra* tradition, following the Purāṇic style and possibly āgamic literature, lavishes extravagant praise on Śrī, and Rāmānuja's verses do not depart from the norm. It would be improper to judge an impassioned hymn from the standpoint of a conservative commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtras* and consider one a truer expression of Rāmānuja's beliefs than the other.

3. Dr. Lester says that "the third innovation of the *gadya* is its frequent use of the term *nityakaiṅkarya* with reference to the state of release—each time as a distinct step beyond the experience of Bhagavān.[35]" This term is not used by Rāmānuja in his philosophical writings, though he does defend the importance of service (*sevā*) in the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*. The Āḻvārs desired loving service to the Lord, and in *The Jewel* (46) Yāmuna uses the very term *nitya-kiṅkara:* "When can I serve you exclusively and be delighted?" And so we have to look back on the *stotra* tradition again to understand Rāmānuja's *Gadya*.

4. Professor Lester points out a "terminological" discrepancy between Rāmānuja's other works and the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*. He indicates that the phrase *para-bhakti-para-jñāna-parama-bhakti* occurs as a formula seven times in the *Gadya* and cannot be found elsewhere. He says that "we may allow this is a terminological rather than a theological discrepancy, but it is nonetheless important."[36] While Dr. Lester is quite correct in pointing out that Rāmānuja did not employ this phrase elsewhere, we must also note the stylistic similarities between the *Gadyas* and Rāmānuja's other works. These are given in Appendix 3. We should also add that the argument from silence is never conclusive. Also, curiously enough, no Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologian contemporary with Rāmānuja uses the phrase. Finally, it is worth keeping in mind the different textures of the literature and the differences in the kinds of statements made in a philosophical treatise and a *stotra*. Yāmuna's works provide classic examples illustrating this point. His works ranged from the philosophical *Siddhi-traya* and *Āgama-prāmāṇyam* to the impassioned *Stotra-ratna* (*The Jewel*). With Yāmuna's sustained recollections of his identity in the first three and last verses of *The Jewel*

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and with several *stotras* so similar to *The Jewel* following within a generation of Yāmuna—we shall see shortly the similarity between *The Jewel*, the *Gadyas*, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ's *stavas*—it is impossible to accept that the *Gadyas* were authored by someone else. And so, one should compare the *Gadyas* of Rāmānuja with *stotra* literature to understand their similarities and differences; it is fallacious to compare the devotional, confessional pieces with theological treatises and polemical writings.

To neglect the *stotra* literature of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition is to ignore one side of the inheritance of the Ubhaya-vedānta, to which the community sees itself as heir. The *stotra* literature has been modeled on the hymns of the Āḻvārs, and to dismiss them as deviant from the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy is arbitrary. There is no basis for holding either the philosophical works or the *stotras* as the only source of information and considering the other literature as containing discrepant ideas.

J. A. B. van Buitenen concludes:

> The gadyas may be described more precisely as exercises in bhakti as taught by Rāmānuja . . . Large portions are repeated . . . and many passages are practically identical with such evocations as the introduction to the Gītābhāṣya and comments *ad* Gītā 9,34; and they are strongly reminiscent of Yāmuna's hymns. . . . Though formerly I hesitated, there is no valid reason to doubt the authenticity of this little devotional work: perhaps modern scholars are too apt to suspect lyrics that are ascribed to philosophers and to forget that these philosophers were theologians and officiating priests. The songs of St. Thomas Aquinas, whom nobody would suspect of lyrical aspirations on the basis of his philosophical works, furnish an interesting parallel.[37]

On the basis of our discussion so far, we join Professor van Buitenen in urging that the *Gadyas* be accepted as authentic works of Rāmānuja. Since Dr. Lester's arguments are based on the difference in style and content between the *Gadyas* and other works of Rāmānuja and on the similarity of the *Gadyas* to the writings of the thirteenth-century Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologians, I shall reply to these arguments again in the next two chapters, on Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Piḷḷāṉ, where I shall show how the sentiments these authors express are similar to those expressed in the *Gadyas*. Further, the entire thrust of our emphasis on the distinctive features of the different literary genres has been to demonstrate that the expressions through one medium should not be seen as contradicting what has been stated through another; rather, these expressions should be seen within the context of other works of that same genre. The *Gadyas*, therefore, should be seen as complementing the other works of Rāmānuja. Just as *The Jewel* furthers our understanding of Yāmuna's faith, the *Gadya-traya* adds an important dimension to our understanding of Rāmānuja's. To challenge the *Gadyas*' authenticity is to question more than their authorship; it is to deny Rāmānuja's in-

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volvement with the entire *Pāñcarātra* and Āḻvār literature and practices and to claim that the later Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition has fabricated hundreds of incidents connecting the *ācārya* with sectarian theism.

Structure and Content of the Gadyas

The thrust of the *Gadyas* is two-fold: an ardent surrender to the Lord based on Rāmānuja's love (*prīti*) and his professed spiritual poverty, and a seeking of *kaiṅkarya* (loving service) to the Lord.

In the annals of Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature, the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* is unique in that it comprises a conversation between Rāmānuja and Śrī, and then one between Rāmānuja and the Lord.[38] The work also incorporates verses from *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. The verses thus quoted from the epics or the *Purāṇas* either fit Rāmānuja's mood or are fitted into the Lord's answer to Rāmānuja's appeal. Tradition holds that the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* records a real conversation, a mystic experience of Rāmānuja, who, overcome by emotion while watching the Lord and Śrī being taken on a procession from the Śrī-raṅgam temple, surrendered himself to them.[39]

The first part of the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* is very similar to other works, as we shall shortly see; the second half consists of the Lord's assurances to Rāmānuja. As mentioned, part of this conversation takes place through scriptural quotations. Rāmānuja surrenders himself through the words of Arjuna and asks the Lord to forgive him even as a parent, lover, or friend would forgive those dear to them. Through the words of Gāndhārī, a character in the epic *Mahābhārata,* Rāmānuja hails the Lord as his father, mother, friend, teacher, wealth, knowledge—as his "all." Through each of these relationships, through the recollection of myths, the refuge is sanctioned. The Lord assures Rāmānuja of salvation, and the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* records the promises the Lord has made on various occasions. We may recall the importance of these promises in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition: Yāmuna had asked, "Lord, I have sought your protection, saying that I am yours. Remember your pledge—does your promise hold good for everyone except me?" (*The Jewel* 64). Rāmānuja's remembrance of these promises seems prefectly natural in this mood. He has made his plea, and the Lord assures him of his salvation, as he has assured the world of his being the refuge for all times.

The very uniqueness of the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, coupled with the similarity of several of its passages to those in other works of Rāmānuja, leads us to reaffirm that only he could have written it. John Carman asks, "As one looks at the early Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, one can hardly help but ask: who but Rāmānuja would have composed a poem in prose?"[40] We can add: which other Śrī Vaiṣṇava would have dared pass off such an intensely personal poem as Rāmānuja's?

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While the format of *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* is unique to the extent we have discussed, several themes and passages are similar to those in other works of Rāmānuja. I illustrate this similarity in two tables in Appendix 3a. There I list similar phrases from the introduction to the *Gītā-bhāṣya*, the *Sundara-bāhu-stava* of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, and the earlier part of the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*. We also see this format in *Gb* 9.34 and in some phrases and themes occurring in the *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*.[41]

In the *Śrīraṅga-gadya*, Rāmānuja professes that he does not deserve the longed-for goal of *kaiṅkarya*, or loving service, because he has neither the ability to practice *bhakti-yoga* nor any other good quality; therefore he takes refuge at the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa. Here he expresses the common denominator of all *prapannas:* professed inability to practice the *yoga* that will give one the direct mental vision of the Lord in *dhyāna*, coupled with confidence that the Lord is nevertheless one's protector—a confidence that comes from taking refuge at his feet.

Rāmānuja's taking refuge at the feet of the Lord because he cannot perform *bhakti-yoga*, etc., recalls the sentiments Yāmuna expressed in *The Jewel*. Kūrattāḻvāṉ also makes similar confessions in his *stavas*, as we shall see shortly, and Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases Nammāḻvār as saying that he cannot practice *bhakti-yoga* and is taking refuge at the Lord's feet. It is very important to note that neither in his writings nor in the later Śrī Vaiṣṇava perception of Rāmānuja do we find any indication that he practiced *bhakti-yoga*. While he declares the importance of *bhakti-yoga* in his commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and other works, in his *Gadyas* he says that he does not have the ability to practice *bhakti-yoga*. Rāmānuja follows the *stotra* tradition when he takes refuge in the Lord on the basis of his "helplessness" (*ākiñcanya*) and meditates on the Lord as the only refuge by recalling the Lord's promises and the myths of redemption. Rāmānuja's faith is evident when we see the importance he places on the relationships between the Lord and the human being and on the Lord's promises in the *Gītā* and *Rāmāyaṇa*.[42] Rāmānuja quotes these in the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, reminding the Lord of his promise, as Yāmuna did earlier. Their devotion and surrender thus rests on a promise the Lord makes in the scripture—a promise of grace and refuge willingly and freely made in consideration of man's lowliness rather than his deserts. In the promises the Lord makes in the epics, he offers compassion to those who acknowledge their weaknesses and salvation to those who surrender themselves, seeking refuge in him.

This, then, is the last word of Rāmānuja, a sentiment understood and shared by his disciples and emphasized by them. It is this sharing of sentiments that we shall now turn to in our discussions of Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Piḷḷāṉ, and then Parāśara Bhaṭṭar.

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The Sanskrit Hymns of Kūrattāḻvāṉ

Kūrattāḻvāṉ, the scribe and disciple of Rāmānuja, is also the author of five Sanskrit hymns (*stavas, stotras*). These verses reflect his devotion to Viṣṇu and Śrī and portray his surrender to them. In Kūrattāḻvāṉ's Sanskrit hymns we see the influence of Āḻvār Tamil poetry, explicit mention of Pāñcarātric theology (the fivefold manifestations of Viṣṇu),[1] acute expressions of his sinful nature, and passionate verses of submission to the Lord. Kūrattāḻvāṉ's style follows *The Jewel* of Yāmuna and the *Gadyas* of Rāmānuja, and the sentiments are similar to those found in the emotional poetry of the Āḻvārs.

Some of Kūrattāḻvāṉ's verses have been incorporated in the daily liturgy of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.[2] Kūrattāḻvāṉ is also remembered by the community for his role in saving the life of his teacher, Rāmānuja, and the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas celebrate his bravery in an annual ritual. Just a few days before the celebration of Rāmānuja's birthday each year,[3] the image of Kūrattāḻvāṉ is taken in procession around the temple at Śrī Perumbudur, the birthplace of Rāmānuja. During the ritual, Kūrattāḻvāṉ's robes are changed from his habitual white (the color worn by men in the householder stage of life) to saffron, which identifies an ascetic (*sannyāsī*). This ritual marks the anniversary of the day, about nine hundred years ago, when he donned the robes of Rāmānuja to masquerade as him in the presence of the persecuting Cōḻa king, allowing his teacher to escape to the safer lands of Mysore.

According to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava hagiography, *The Splendor*, Kūrattāḻvāṉ's eyes were put out in the course of this masquerade, and Periya Nampi, a teacher of Rāmānuja's, was put to death.[4] It is said that Kūrattāḻvāṉ escaped to the Pāṇḍya kingdom, and while taking refuge at Tirumāliruñcōlai, near Madurai (a place the Āḻvārs sung about), composed a work in praise of the Lord enshrined in that temple. It is evident that Kūrattāḻvāṉ wrote this work, the *Sundara-bāhu-stava* (*SbS*), or "Hymn to the Lord with Handsome Arms," when Rāmānuja was in Karṇāṭaka, since he talks about his separation from his master and petitions for reunion. The other four works by Kūrattāḻvāṉ are the *Varadarāja-stava* (*VrS*), which he addresses to the Lord at Kāñcipuram, the *Śrī-stava*, in praise of Śrī, the *Vaikuṇṭha-stava* (*VaiS*), and the *Atimānuṣa-stava* (*AmS*).[5]

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Importance of the Stotra Tradition

Kūrattāḻvāṉ composed only *stotras*, continuing the tradition of Yāmuna's *The Jewel* and Rāmānuja's *Gadyas*. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava *stotras* are extremely important for our understanding of *bhakti* and *prapatti*, and once again we must notice the similarities in style and texture among them.[6] The Śrī Vaiṣṇava *stotras* differ from earlier hymns of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and other Sanskrit literature in that they (a) have a heightened sense of the author's unworthiness, (b) frequently translate concepts and phrases from the Āḻvār poetry into Sanskrit, and (c) follow the format seen in Yāmuna's *The Jewel* in some fashion. This pattern includes contemplation of unworthiness; statements of the Lord's superiority; lists of his auspicious qualities, as well as his consorts, attendants, and weapons; the taking of refuge; pleas for compassion; a reminder to the Lord of his earlier promises to protect one who takes refuge in him; and further meditation on one's *ācārya*. The *stotras* of Kūrattāḻvāṉ and the later preceptors include all or most of these elements. In this regard we may note the striking similarities in the themes of Yāmuna's *The Jewel*, Rāmānuja's *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ's *Vaikuṇṭha-stava*.

In his *stotras*, Kūrattāḻvāṉ renders the Tamil idiom into Sanskrit and translates some of the Āḻvārs' sentiments into Sanskrit as well. What we do not have in the *stotras* is the openly erotic stance that some of the Āḻvārs took by adopting the role of a heroine pining for her beloved. The closest we come to this passion is in the repeated requests for loving service, a mood *not* divorced from the erotic sentiments of the Āḻvārs.

Conceivably, these *stotras* were written for those who in some way shared the *bhakti* milieu and possibly the Śrī Vaiṣṇava world view but who did not know Tamil. It is important to note that no attempt was made in the dynamically formative centuries of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community to translate the works of the Āḻvārs into Sanskrit, although Tamil phrases and verses were adapted and the fervor was conveyed in Sanskrit. In the thirteenth century, Vedānta Deśika and Maṇavāḷa Māmuni wrote detailed interpretive summaries of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḻvār.[7] The *Tvm* was translated in the nineteenth century, but not until long after the wave of *bhakti* had spread over India and influenced millions of people. This happened not just through the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* but probably through the medium of Sanskrit *stotras* as well.

In Quest of Compassion

We find a variety of moods in Kūrattāḻvāṉ's hymns, even as we did in the verses of the Āḻvārs. Most striking are his acute expressions of lowliness and unworthiness, but in other places he adopts a bantering, almost teasing, note while recollecting the playfulness of the Lord. And so, we find two kinds of

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verses in Kūrattāḻvāṉ's *stotras*—some expressing his own unworthiness and others celebrating the Lord's accessibility. These different kinds of verses appear when he alternately seeks the Lord's compassion (*dayā*) and his love (*prema*). In a certain sense one can say that Kūrattāḻvāṉ perceives the Lord's compassion to be general but his love to be the prerogative of his *bhakta*. When he requests the Lord's compassion, we notice a lingering meditation on his own lowliness (*naicyānusandhāna*), but when he celebrates the Lord's accessibility we sense a playful tone.

In going through Kūrattāḻvāṉ's verses, we see that he requests the Lord's compassion on at least three grounds. Kūrattāḻvāṉ does not state these systematically, but we can glean them easily from the *stavas*. First, he claims to be totally devoid of any merit and therefore undeserving of divine grace, and so he takes refuge in the Lord. Second, he believes that the *words of surrender* he has uttered make him a "refugee" (*śaraṇāgata*), and that the Lord, because of his earlier promises, *has* to save him. Finally, we see repeated pleas for compassion based on his spiritual relationship with his preceptor, Rāmānuja.

Meditations on his Lowliness

Kūrattāḻvāṉ's meditations on his lowliness (*naicyānusandhāna*) are some of the most pronounced in Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature. While many *ācāryas* have expressed feelings of worthlessness and reproached themselves for their sins, Kūrattāḻvāṉ's verses are easily the most intense and poignant, and like Yāmuna in *The Jewel*, he makes his worthlessness the very premise for seeking the Lord's compassion.

Kūrattāḻvāṉ, like Yāmuna, confesses his audacity in trying to praise the Lord. In both the *Vaikuṇṭha-stava* and the *Śrī-stava* he expresses this:

> Though cognizant of my ignorance, I am shameless enough to wish to string together these words of love for the feet of our Lord; for even when the [river] Gaṅgā [which is naturally pure] is licked by a dog, it is still known as the holy water.[8]
>
> (*VaiS* 8)

In several ways, Kūrattāḻvāṉ calls himself the most despicable character, who is sinking deeper and deeper into sin and worldly existence:[9]

> Alas, alas! Woe is me! There is no redemption! I am wicked; I fall, I fall. . . . What hope have I to talk of you? What right have I, a worthless, stained person, to even think of you, who are full of auspicious qualities!
>
> (*VaiS* 84)

> What is the use of my ranting? I have done every deed that can be called

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> sin—big and small, both consciously and unwittingly. Please forgive me through your grace (*kṛpā*).
>
> (*VaiS* 89)

This self-deprecation does not stop at a confession of lowliness: Kūrattāḻvāṉ decries his lack of faith and says that he does not even have the desire to reach the Lord:

> I have no faith (*śraddhā*), devotion (*bhakti*), power (*śakti*), or even the desire (*icchā*) to sing your praises or bow before you; nor have I any regret (*anutāpa*) for not embarking on it. . . . Alas! I join the ranks of your enemies.
>
> (*VaiS* 96)

He says that his mind is caught in the snares of attachment, that he is prone to the diseases of the body and mind, but still has no desire (*abhilāṣa*) to reach the Lord (*VrS* 75). With this intense burden, Kūrattāḻvāṉ feels that it is impossible to reach the Lord on his own:

> O Lord who are beyond dualities! O eternally flawless Lord of Hastigiri! I am sinking in this life; I am the source of all enmity, pride, and avarice; I desire the wrong things; I am greedy and deluded. . . . Who am I to attain you—you who have such great attributes?
>
> (*VrS* 76)

Here we see that Kūrattāḻvāṉ's sense of unworthiness has made him feel that it is wrong for him even to aspire for the Lord. Later, Piḷḷāṉ will echo this sentiment.[10]

There is no other way, no other refuge, but the Lord's compassion (*dayā*):

> O handsome Lord of the forested hills! Having no other way (*agati*), no knowledge, no other refuge (*ananya-śaraṇa*), I plead this again and again, and yet again: I am guilty, I am sinful, my mind is disturbed, but I am a vessel for your compassion.
>
> (*SbS* 132)

> O Varada! Though I have no *bhakti* or [good] qualities, though I have done no [good] deed, . . . and though I have committed sins which cannot be expiated, if I attain your feet, your patience (*kṣamā*) and compassion will crystallize.
>
> (*VrS* 95)

Immediately following the verses in which Kūrattāḻvāṉ stresses his spiritual poverty are those in which he takes refuge at the feet of the Lord and pleads for compassion:

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> I am guilty of three types of offenses; I am a sinner; I have fallen into darkness. Without any way (*gati*), I who am a vessel for your compassion seek refuge at your twin feet.
>
> (*AmS* 59)

In the *Varadarāja-stava*, Kūrattāḻvāṉ talks of his lowliness in ten verses and takes refuge at the feet of the Lord, hailing him as the compassionate one:

> I have not done any good deeds; I have done all possible evil deeds; I have not a single [good] quality; I am filled with wrong desires, anger, and a thousand other blemishes; O Lord of compassion, O Varada, I take refuge in you.
> O Varada, even these words of surrender (*śaraṇāgati-vāk*) did not come from a convinced and full mind (*dhī-pūrvikā*); still, if you have compassion toward me, I shall live.
>
> (*VrS* 83–84)

This is the time, says Kūrattāḻvāṉ, for the Lord to show his *dayā*. Since Kūrattāḻvāṉ has no qualification for reaching the Lord, he feels that he is a fit receptacle for his compassion, just as Yāmuna felt earlier:

> I have not done any good deeds (*sat-karma*), nor have I any knowledge (*vidyā*). I have absolutely no *bhakti* for your lotus feet; I am a vessel, my Lord, for your compassion.
>
> (*VaiS* 88)

This *dayā* will make faith complete and will grant whatever Kūrattāḻvāṉ asks for, and so it is with "the ocean of compassion" that he takes refuge:

> I take refuge with him who has Śrī for a treasure and who is the treasure for those who seek him, the friend of all beings, and the treasure house of compassion (*dayā*).
>
> (*VrS* 94)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ's absolute faith in the Lord's compassion (*dayā*) is seen in his verses. Indeed, he hands over to the Lord the entire burden of his protection and future:

> O Varada! I have many desires for other [paltry] things, but none for your twin feet. If I am to develop any desire (*spṛhā*) for your feet, it is your burden (*bhara*) [to see that it develops].
>
> (*VrS* 87)

This desire to cut one's attachments and reach the Lord seems to be the minimal requirement for a human being. Earlier, Poykai Āḻvār asserted that for one who desires to destroy pain and grief, Rāma becomes the refuge (*Mutal Tiru-*

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vantāti 59). Even this desire, says Kūrattāḻvāṉ, is lacking in him, and thus he transfers to the Lord the burden of developing this desire. Elsewhere (*VrS* 91) he says that he will accept anything the Lord grants him, for he has surrendered his burden (*bhara*) completely to the Lord (*yataḥ so 'haṁ tvayi nihita-bharo 'smi*).

This phrase *nihita-bhara*, meaning "having transfered one's burden," is significant, for later on, in the thirteenth century, the *ācārya* Deśika, following the text *Lakṣmī-tantra* (tenth century?), considers *prapatti* to be synonymous with *bhara-nyāsa* ("surrender of one's burden"). It is important to note that Kūrattāḻvāṉ's understanding of surrender coincides on this point.

Kūrattāḻvāṉ says that it is the Lord's responsibility to make his desire grow. Elsewhere he says that if the Lord feels that he should practice any discipline, he (the Lord) should give this weak subject the ability to do so:

> O Varada! If you persist in claiming that you can protect only those who are fit, you yourself should give me the power (*śakti*), the qualification (*adhikāra*), the confidence, [etc.].
>
> (*VaiS* 101)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ also prays to Śrī for *bhakti:*

> Grant me the appropriate words to praise you, a loving (*prema*) mind, and *bhakti*.
>
> (*Śrī-stava* 2)

Because of his professed lowliness, Kūrattāḻvāṉ surrenders himself to the Lord and seeks compassion. He is now a *śaraṇāgata*.

The Lord's Responsibility

Having taken refuge in the Lord, Kūrattāḻvāṉ says that he has become a recipient of his compassion. He says that even if he lacks confidence (*viśrambhaṇam*) and has no faith (*śraddhā*) in the words of surrender that he has uttered, the Lord should, out of compassion, consider his statement, which he said only *once*, to have been said frequently (*sakṛd athāpy asakṛn mayoktam: AmS* 60). In the *Varadarāja-stava* he emphasizes this often:

> O Varada! Even these words of surrender (*śaraṇam iti vāg api*) could not have come without your grace (*prasāda*); therefore you are gracious toward me. Now I live.
>
> (*VrS* 88)

These words of *prapatti*, claims Kūrattāḻvāṉ, are his only *sādhana*, his only path and means:

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O Varada! I have no *sādhana* apart from these words of refuge (*śaraṇa-varaṇa-vāk*). This is accessible to me (*sulabha*). . . . This is the opportune time to show your compassion.

(*VrS* 86)

O Lord! Whoever you are, whatever your manifestations, whatever your work, you are inaccessible to all but your *bhaktas*—and I desire to see you simply [because I have uttered] my *words of surrender* (*prapatti-vācaiva*).

(*VrS* 92)

This statement is extremely significant, for Kūrattāḻvāṉ proclaims that his words of taking refuge are themselves a means, a *sādhana,* for reaching the Lord.[11] Tortured by his alleged sins, having no other refuge but the Lord's compassion, he surrenders to the Lord, and with these words of surrender he proclaims himself a *śaraṇāgata* to whom the Lord has to be compassionate. He has transferred the burden of his own protection to someone else and has pleaded for refuge. He is now a *śaraṇāgata,* and this status seems to guarantee the Lord's compassion:

Though I am a sinner, I bear the name *śaraṇāgata,* and thus it is not fit for you, who are my Lord, to ignore me. When you have wisdom, power, and mercy (*karuṇā*), how can my sins seem prominent?

(*AmS* 61)

Whatever one's caste, whoever one may be, whatever one's nature, [the Lord] makes no distinction if one has taken refuge at [his] feet. The handsome Lord favors such a person through his "maternal" love (*vātsalya*).

(*SbS* 30)

The Lord's compassion is Kūrattāḻvāṉ's strength:

O Lord of the Kari Hill! Your compassion (*dayā*) fulfills the desires of those who worship (*bhajantī*) you with their qualities (*guṇa*), actions, and knowledge, or through their *bhakti*. That very *dayā* is decidedly my strength (*bala*).

(*VrS* 94)

In this respect Kūrattāḻvāṉ does not see much difference between himself (the *prapanna*) and other aspirants, for nothing can be done outside the Lord's help:

Practicing the discipline of actions and bringing it to a successful com-

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pletion could not be accomplished without your help—and so there is really no difference between them and me!

(*VaiS* 100)

The distinction between those who strive through *karma-*, *jñāna-*, and *bhakti-yoga* and the *prapanna*, whose strength is the Lord's compassion, collapses in Kūrattāḻvāṉ's verses.

Kūrattāḻvāṉ's Connection with Rāmānuja

Kūrattāḻvāṉ's third premise for claiming compassion is his connection with his *ācāryas*, who, he says, are connected with Śrī:

O Varada! I am one who has sought refuge at the feet of Rāmānuja. That Rāmānuja is the light of Yāmuna's clan, and Yāmuna is from the lineage (*vaṁśa*) of Nāthamuni, who hails from the *vaṁśa* of Parāṅkuśa [Nammāḻvār]. That Nammāḻvār is a servant of your consort; so, I am fit for your glance.

(*VrS* 102)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ has indicated his debt to Rāmānuja in his *stavas*, stating explicitly that he has learned all he knows from Rāmānuja:

I who have sought refuge at the feet of Hari, which are filled with the radiance of Śrī,[12] and have obtained all my knowledge from the sage Rāmānuja, now without any fear begin to praise the Lord who has beautiful arms.

(*SbS* 1)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ takes refuge at the feet of his teacher, just as Maturakavi Āḻvār and Yāmuna did before him. This verse has become celebrated in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community and is recited before starting the daily worship:

I take refuge at the feet of Rāmānuja (*rāmānujasya caraṇau śaraṇaṁ prapadye*), who, through his passion (*vyāmoha*) for the golden hue of the lotus feet of the Lord, considers all else to be straw;[13] that Rāmānuja, who is my teacher (*guru*) and my lord, is an ocean of compassion (*dayaika-sindho*).

(*VaiS* 1)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ, like Yāmuna, sees his association with his preceptor as leading to the compassion of the Lord, and the words that he employs suggest that he has formally surrendered himself to Rāmānuja:

O Lord! Though accepted by Rāmānuja, who has such love for your feet, I still have a passion for other [lowly] things. Is there anyone who has committed more evil deeds than I?

(*VaiS* 90)

Like Maturakavi Āḻvār, who took refuge with Nammāḻvār, Kūrattāḻvāṉ sur-

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renders to a living preceptor. But for Maturakavi Āḻvār this surrender precluded his taking of refuge with the Lord —he was totally dedicated to his preceptor. Yāmuna takes refuge with Nāthamuni in the opening stanzas of *The Jewel*, but this poem was composed after the *ācārya's* lifetime. After taking refuge with his preceptor, Yāmuna surrenders himself to the Lord and seeks his compassion. Kūrattāḻvāṉ, following Maturakavi Āḻvār's example, takes refuge in a preceptor who is a contemporary, but unlike the Āḻvār and like Yāmuna, he then surrenders to the Lord and asks for his compassion. Thus, while we have a precedent in the Āḻvār poetry for taking refuge with a human being and entering into a relationship so complete and satisfying that it precludes surrendering to the Lord, Kūrattāḻvāṉ, like Yāmuna, has chosen to do both. Kūrattāḻvāṉ hails both the *ācārya* and the Lord as being full of compassion even as he takes refuge with them:

> I take refuge at the feet of that Rāmānuja . . . who is an ocean of compassion (*dayaika-sindho*).
>
> (*VaiS* 1)

> I take refuge at the feet of the Lord, who is a treasure of compassion (*dayā-nidhim*).
>
> (*VrS* 2)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ makes further requests based on this compassion— requests for service to the Lord and for other things. We shall discuss these aspects of his poems now.

Service to the Lord

Kūrattāḻvāṉ's ultimate aim is to serve the Lord. His love overflows into a desire to serve; like Yāmuna, he craves an adoring worshipful service to the Lord:

> O Lord of Hastigiri! I, who know the joys of being your servant, consider all other alternatives—the post of Śiva, self-realization or whatever is deemed to be liberation—as worthless as sea-water.
>
> (*VrS* 81)

Thus service is the ultimate aim, but Kūrattāḻvāṉ makes a mysterious further request:

> O Lord of unsurpassed compassion! O sea of patience! O source of everything! Since I am caught up in several attachments, I pray for something (*yat kim api*). Pray grant me this.
>
> (*VrS* 90)

Tradition says that in these verses Kūrattāḻvāṉ is making a veiled request that the Lord return his lost eyesight.[14] But this desire, he insists, should in no way interfere with his desire to reside at the Lord's feet:

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> O Varada! If what I wish for is in no way an obstruction to my attaining your feet, pray grant it. Otherwise, just give me your feet [i.e., service].
>
> (*VrS* 89)

More explicit is Kūrattāḻvāṉ's request at the end of the *Sundara-bāhu-stava:*

> O Lord of the forested hills! You brought back to life those killed in the battle at Laṅkā. You revived the son of the twice-born who died young. You recovered Sāndīpani's child and you gave life to the fetus that hailed from the race of Arjuna. You are constant. How can you not grant the desire of my *guru* and me?[15]
>
> (*SbS* 124)

This *stotra,* written in Tirumāliruñcōlai during Kūrattāḻvāṉ's exile, confirms that Kūrattāḻvāṉ was separated from Rāmānuja. It is important because it is the earliest reference of its kind and comes from a nonhagiographical source.

Kūrattāḻvāṉ's requests to be reunited with his *guru* and his veiled request for "something" (eyesight?) are significant, for they come immediately after he takes refuge with the Lord. While these requests are made in proper humility and a submissive spirit, they are nevertheless different from the usual petitions for compassion (*dayā*) or loving service (*kaiṅkarya*), especially as they *follow words of śaraṇāgati.*[16] We find no precedents in the hymns of the Āḻvārs or Yāmuna for requests of this kind. While these requests are obviously not for any personal gain, they form a precedent for later *ācāryas* to assert that one may surrender to the Lord and petition for goals other than liberation.

But is the Lord's compassion available to everyone? If all people—including the wicked—are to be released from sins, how can one explain the Lord's justice? Later Śrī Vaiṣṇavas wrestle with the question of the relationship between the Lord's grace and justice on the one hand and the act of *śaraṇāgati* on the other, resolving the question in a number of ways that become characteristic of the Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai sects. It is our task here to see what the earlier generations have to say about it. Rāmānuja's emphasis is on the Lord favoring his devotee or protecting those who come to him for refuge. Kūrattāḻvāṉ's *stavas* are emotional praises of the Lord; we cannot look to them for explicit or systematic statements on mercy, grace, or justice. Rather, we can simply discern in them his prayerful attitude toward the question.

We have seen that Kūrattāḻvāṉ invests extraordinary faith in the Lord's compassion, which he has declared to be his main support. And he seeks this compassion through his words of surrender. He is a *śaraṇāgata,* and the Lord will protect him through his compassion. Kūrattāḻvāṉ's words of surrender are his *sādhana:* these words have been uttered by a supposedly insignificant person, and therefore the Lord has scope to show his compassion to the fullest extent. Thus, speaking the words of surrender is apparently necessary if the Lord is to

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show his compassion, but this utterance cannot be called "human effort," for even the ability to speak the words of *śaraṇāgati*, claims Kūrattāḻvāṉ, comes only through the favor and grace (*prasāda*) of the Lord (*VrS* 88). It is in this sense that the Lord himself can be called the *hita*, the *upāya*, or the way, for it is his grace and compassion that enable one to say the words of surrender and reach him.

Can the Lord bestow this favor upon anyone? The verse just cited provides no direct answer, so we have to look for Kūrattāḻvāṉ's understanding of the issue in his other works. Who takes the first step—the Lord or the individual? Kūrattāḻvāṉ provides a clue when he highlights the Lord's forgiveness and patience. The Lord will forgive anyone who desists from his evil deeds for just a moment:

> In half a second, an individual commits sins that cannot be expiated in a hundred thousand of Brahmā's *kalpas*. If this soul who stands guilty in his lifetime but pauses [from his sinning] for just a minute, you forgive him! Is this not wonderful?
>
> (*VaiS* 61)

So great is the Lord's patience and forgiving love that merely a *pause* in the process of sinning evokes the Lord's forgiveness. If simply refraining from a sinful act can evoke so much of the Lord's forgiveness and love, asks Kūrattāḻvāṉ, is it surprising that he is loving toward his devotee?

> So great is your clemency [that you forgive even those who pause from their sinning for a moment]. And so it is but natural that you should also direct your forgiveness toward those who fold their hands in adoration. When your maternal love (*vātsalya*) is directed toward all people without distinction, is it any wonder that you are also clement toward those who ardently desire you?
>
> (*VaiS* 62)

That the compassion of the Lord is overwhelming to one who makes a positive gesture toward him is brought out in the verse immediately following the one just quoted:

> Through your [mere] will you create, protect, and destroy the worlds—but through your love for your devotee (*samāśrita-vatsalatve*) you ran to Gajendra when he summoned you and even massaged his foot [when you could have just as well done it by your mere will]!
>
> (*VaiS* 63)

The sentiment echoes a verse of *Tiruvāymoḻi:*

> If through merely your will you protect your servants, will your luster seem hidden? Is that why you rushed on your bird [Garuḍa] and wielded

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your sharp discus to save [Gajendra], who loved to serve you?
(*Tvm* 3.1.9)

The relationship between the devotee and the Lord is unique, and it is in this context that we understand Kūrattāḻvāṉ's notion of the love existing between the Lord and the human being.

The Bonds of Love

Kūrattāḻvāṉ emphasizes not just the compassion but the intense love of the Lord. Just as Kūrattāḻvāṉ pleads for compassion, he asks for love:

> Glance at me with eyes flooded with the nectar of love, . . . eyes which stole the hearts of your beloved ones.
>
> (*SbS* 44)

The Lord's compassion and love are the sustenance of the devotee. Kūrattāḻvāṉ proclaims the Lord's special affection for his devotee in two ways: first, by his explicit statements, and second, by the bantering attitude he adopts when overwhelmed by the Lord's accessibility (*saulabhya*). Here we see *bhakti* in the sense of what its original etymology suggests—a mutual sharing and partaking of love: the Lord reciprocates the human being's devotion, dependence, love, and adoration in a fuller measure.

The Lord's auspicious qualities are enjoyed by his devotee:

> O Varadarāja! Your boundless and countless excellent qualities, like compassion (*dayā*), patience (*kṣānti*), generosity (*audārya*), gentleness (*mṛdimā*), equality (*samatva*), friendship (*sauhārda*), grace (*prasāda*), love (*prema*), resoluteness (*ājña*), and accessibility to your devotees (*āśrita-sulabhatva*), bring such enjoyment to your adoring devotees (*praṇata-jana-bhoga*).
>
> (*VrS* 19)

Every manifestation of the Lord is for the welfare and enjoyment of his devotees. All five manifestations of the Lord mentioned by the Āḻvārs and by Pāñcarātric literature are also mentioned explicitly by Kūrattāḻvāṉ:

> O Varada, Lord who grants boons! Whatever your manifestations—*para, vyūha, vibhava, arcā,* or *antaryāmī*[17]—you have all the auspicious qualities fit for lordship and appropriate for those forms. You manifest yourself thus in several ways to those who adore (*bhajadbhyaḥ*) you; for others you appear otherwise [i.e., without your auspicious qualities].
>
> (*VrS* 18)

Nammāḻvār earlier said, "To those with *bhakti* he [the Lord] is accessible; to others, elusive" (*Tvm* 1.3.1).

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The Lord appears in his fourfold *vyūha* form essentially to shower grace on his devotees. Kūrattāḻvāṉ says:

> You have boundless wisdom (*jñāna*), strength (*bala*), valor (*vīrya*), power (*śakti*), and splendor (*tejas*)—six qualities in three pairs. . . . You become four [*vyūhas*] and [thus show] grace to your devotees (*bhaktaṁ janam*) with love (*anurāga*).
>
> (*AmS* 6)

The *arcā* and the *avatāra* forms fascinate Kūrattāḻvāṉ. He addresses two *stavas* to deities in two important temples of Kāñci and Tirumāliruñcōlai. He exquisitely describes the Lord's beauty but never forgets that the Lord who manifests himself as an *arcā* is the supreme being spoken of in the *Upaniṣads*, the inaccessible Lord of the *Vedas*. It is this Lord, who is so mighty and yet so gracious that he appears to human eyes, whom Kūrattāḻvāṉ takes refuge of:

> The *Upaniṣads* say that none is greater than or equal to him. May that divine one who adorns the Hasti Hill be benevolent to me.
> That great being who is distant even to the minds of the *yogīs* who have conquered their senses, who is not known even in the *Vedānta*, stands manifest on the Hasti Hill. . . .
> I take refuge in that holy Varada of the Hasti Hill, up to whose height even the sacred tree of the *Vedas*, with its manifold branches, seeks to reach.
>
> (*VrS* 1, 3–4)

It is out of intense love for his *bhaktas* that the Lord presents himself in Śrīraṅgam exactly as he is in the Ocean of Milk:

> O handsome Lord of the forested hills! You lay down on your serpent, Śeṣa, in the midst of the ocean of milk. Out of your intense parental love (*vātsalya*), you wanted to show this glory of yours to your *bhaktas* in this world. So in the midst of this river, in Śrī-raṅgam, you lie down on your serpent, Śeṣa, so that all eyes may see you.
>
> (*SbS* 119)

It seems that the reason for every appearance of the Lord is to shower grace upon or protect his devotees. In Kūrattāḻvāṉ's *stavas* we find several paradigmatic instances of the Lord's salvific actions and special concern for his devotees. Every recollection of an act seems to inspire fresh confidence in Kūrattāḻvāṉ. The Lord saved a Pāṇḍyan ruler (an incident recorded only in a verse by Periyāḻvār):

> O Lord of the forested hills! I have heard that on this very hill you made

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> King Malayadhvaja attached to your feet. Will you not do likewise to me?
>
> (*SbS* 128)

Periyāḻvār earlier said, "Tirumāliruñcōlai is the hill celebrated even by the southern king, the King of Kūṭal [i.e. Madurai, the capital of the Pāṇḍya kingdom] who was called the dignified Māraṇ with the sharp killing spear." (*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.2.7).

For the sake of his "servant and friend" Sugrīva, the Lord killed Sugrīva's enemy Vāli (*AmS* 20). The Lord is prepared to do anything for his devotee. He bore the transgressions of Hiraṇya for a long time, but when Hiraṇya began to cause harm to Prahlāda, a devotee, the Lord quickly incarnated himself:

> O my refuge (*śaraṇya*)! You who kept quiet for ages while Hiraṇya committed thousands of transgressions, but who got angry when a little child was harmed. . . .
> O Varada! You showed your greatness when you became Narasiṁha after your *bhakta* said [you were everywhere] and you manifested yourself in that pillar.
>
> (*VrS* 69, 71)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ marvels at the incredible *saulabhya* of the Lord in his *avatāras;* indeed he has written a whole work (*Atimānuṣa-stava*) celebrating the *human* attributes the divine one assumes when he incarnates. Even in the midst of the *Sundara-bāhu-stava,* which he dedicated to the *arcā* form of the Lord at Tirumāliruñcōlai, Kūrattāḻvāṉ includes several verses praising the various *avatāras*. Much more than the grandeur of his resplendent glory in heaven, it is the happy, frolicsome image of youthful Kṛṣṇa at Vṛndāvana that entrances Kūrattāḻvāṉ:

> Killing Kaṁsa or winning the three worlds will not make you famous! It is your grazing of the cows [seemingly] as your occupation that overwhelms the hearts of the wise men! Come [to me] in the glory of your supreme form and in the glory of your cowherd garments, wearing a peacock feather on your head, with your hair dirtied by your grazing cows, and reside in my heart!
>
> (*AmS* 54–55)

Scattered among the verses of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, we find several reasons for the Lord's incarnating himself, and these invariably involve love for his *bhakta* and compassion for the world. The most popular reasons for the Lord incarnating himself, which are mentioned in the *Gītā,* are those of protecting good people and destroying the evil ones. Kūrattāḻvāṉ expresses these in a different way in the verse quoted earlier—that the Lord could bear the transgressions of Hiraṇya, but when Prahlāda was affected he came down immediately. Further, verse 86 of the *Sundara-bāhu-stava* is similar to *Gītā* 4.8: Kūrattāḻvāṉ mentions specifically that the Lord came down to protect the *bhaktas* and destroy their enemies.

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The Lord's *avatāras* further provide people with a refuge: "If you had not been born from divine and human wombs we could not have known that we could take refuge in you in any other way." (*AmS* 9). It is out of his extreme friendliness and amiability (*śīla*) toward the world that he incarnates himself (*AmS* 10). Though he is ontologically independent, he is emotionally dependent on his devotees. As Kūrattāḻvāṉ says, it is to feel and delight in the warmth of his *bhaktas*' embraces that he comes down to this earth:

> O Varada! There is nothing that you need, for the creation, protection, and destruction of the worlds happen through your will. It is to embrace your devotees (*āśritas*) and destroy those who harm them that you descend through the wombs of lowly divinities (*suras*) and mortals (*naras*).
>
> (*VrS* 64)

The *avatāra* himself is a manifestation of the Lord's overwhelming friendship, but the Lord does not stop here. He allows himself to be treated as a mere mischievous child, and his pranks astonish the worlds. His foster mother, tired of her neighbors' complaints against her son, irately ties him (as she would any other mischievous child) to a large stone mortar. The mighty Lord of all the worlds stands as a toddler, punished by his mother. Bound to a stone with a tight knotted string around his waist, he cries as any other child would. This image entrances the Āḻvārs, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ dwells on this myth at some length. It is this image of the divine child who allows himself to be bound that Kūrattāḻvāṉ sees as expressive of the Lord's love for his devotees, and he delights in singing of this incredible love:

> O Varada! Out of love (*vātsalya*) for your devotees you can incarnate yourself in this world as you desire. Further, you make yourself accessible to your devotees. But why should you get yourself tied by a cord and stand crying?
>
> (*VrS* 109)

> O handsome Lord! Being close to your devotees, you were born as a human; but why should you stand crying, bound to a stone?
>
> (*SbS* 109)

The tight knotted string is like a jeweled chain on the child's waist (*VrS* 51). Kūrattāḻvāṉ playfully teases the child:

> They say that you cannot be apprehended even by divine eyes or a pure mind, that you can cut all bonds [of attachment], that you are the supreme Lord. But we have heard that you, who are [all-pervasive], were bound by a string. Can you not untie it? Ah, what wonder is this!
>
> (*AmS* 36)

The supreme Lord stands bound by a silly string, amenable to his devotees' command, dependent on their moods, bound by their love:

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> The dignified Yaśodā could not bear your mischief and bound you—you who had stolen all the milk products from the cowherd women—with the strings of her love. Noble souls can't bear this!
>
> (*AmS* 40)

The Lord allows himself to be bound by his devotees' love, and this grace of the Lord binds him eternally to generations of future devotees:

> O Lord! Because you were bound by your mother with a string, you tie yourself to the hearts of all those who hear of [this pastime], and also to those who [because of their love] shed tears over it! I suppose it is natural, but must you show your valor in this manner to those who have already succumbed to you?
>
> (*AmS 41*)

The cords that bound Kṛṣṇa are the cords of love. Just as the child Kṛṣṇa was dependent on his mother, so the supreme Lord, independent and unique, he who so confidently asserted in the *Gītā* that he is dependent on no other being, stands dependent on his devotees and those who seek refuge in him:

> O Varada! The holy *Vedas* say that you are not dependent on anyone, but we consider you, who are dependent on those who adore you, to be a dependent being.
>
> (*VrS* 20)

Rāmānuja went no further than to paraphrase the Lord's statement that he could not sustain his soul without the wise *bhakta* and that he considered the man of wisdom and love almost like a superior:

> Those who worship me out of intense love because they cannot sustain themselves without this worship, which is their only goal, exist with happiness in my very Self, as if their qualities were equal to mine, whatever caste they may be. "I, too, am in them" means that I treat them as if (*iva*) they were my superiors.[18]

But Kūrattāḻvāṉ is not curtailed by having to write to an outside audience that might misconstrue the Lord's dependence on his devotee as a weakness. Kūrattāḻvāṉ considers that it is because the Lord is so full of love and so accessible to man that he [allows] himself to be dependent on his devotee. He is dependent not just on the *bhakta* who is disciplined in *yoga* and learned in the *Vedas*, and who has reached the status of a *jñānī*, but on [all] those who adore him and seek refuge in him. The Lord offers his feet as a refuge for all those who have no protection, and becomes extremely attached to them (*SbS* 4). For them he brims over with parental love (*SbS* 30) and even ignores their faults (*VrS* 20).[19]

It is not just through Kūrattāḻvāṉ's explicit statements that we get a sense of this intense love between the Lord and his devotee, for just as the Āḻvārs moved

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from contemplating their worthlessness to a mood of tender love, Kūrattāḻvāṉ's verses flow between meditations on his lowliness (*naicyānusandhāna*) to a teasing, bantering mood when he plays with the Lord. Overwhelmed by the Lord's accessibility, Kūrattāḻvāṉ in his *Atimānuṣa-stava* indulges in asking him playful questions, celebrating the Lord's "sporting" activities:

> O Lord, you saved [Śiva] from an enormous sin, and his head became purified by virtue of its contact with the holy water of your foot. And you bowed down in front of Śiva and asked for a boon. Your work is sport, and it is strange and wonderful!
>
> (*AmS* 11)

Kūrattāḻvāṉ then contrasts Viṣṇu's lordship over the three worlds with his begging the demon-king Bali for three paces of land (in the Lord's incarnation as a dwarf):

> O Lord, you created the three worlds and kept them in your stomach. . . . So why did you have to beg them from Bali?
> O Lord, I want to ask you a question: When you were Rāma, you said that you were just human and that you were bewildered. You allowed that strange creature to abduct Sītā; you grieved for her in separation and said that you did not know where she was. At the same time, how could you give the supreme state (i.e., *mokṣa*) to Jaṭāyu?
>
> (*AmS* 16–17)

In his philosophical works, Rāmānuja made an authoritative and categorical attempt to preserve the superiority of Nārāyaṇa, and even described Nārāyaṇa's accessibility in conservative terms. In Kūrattāḻvāṉ's works, the author, instead of asserting the Lord's superiority directly, recalls the very deeds of Nārāyaṇa in which he acts inferior to Śiva. Kūrattāḻvāṉ celebrates the paradox that the superiority and remoteness of Nārāyaṇa is less important than his accessibility. For Kūrattāḻvāṉ, the Lord's superiority is an assurance of his compassion, and his accessibility a sign of his love.

Kūrattāḻvāṉ—a close disciple of Rāmānuja, a disciple who has explicitly and implicitly followed his master—emphasizes several issues that Rāmānuja either treated conservatively or remained silent on. Unlike Rāmānuja, Kūrattāḻvāṉ uses the *stotra* genre as a *primary* medium of expression. He is far more explicit in considering his words of surrender to be the *sādhana* by which he can reach the Lord. He petitions the Lord for compassion and celebrates the relationship between the Lord and the devotee.

Piḷḷāṉ, Rāmānuja's cousin, describes several sentiments that Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Rāmānuja also expressed, including the close relationship between the devotee and the deity. Whereas Rāmānuja wrote Sanskrit commentaries, independent works, and devotional hymns, and whereas Kūrattāḻvāṉ composed Sanskrit devotional poems, Piḷḷāṉ wrote a commentary on Nammāḻvār's

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Tiruvāymoḻi in Maṇipravāḷa (a hybrid language of Sanskrit and Tamil). Piḷḷāṉ's connection with the Tamil side of Ubhaya-vedānta is quite pronounced, his commentary being on the Tamil *Veda*. We shall now turn our attention to Piḷḷāṉ's conception of devotion; the following discussion will help us better understand *bhakti* in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition of the eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E.

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5

Piḷḷāṉ's Commentary on the Tamil Veda

The biographical accounts of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community tell us that Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ, also known as Kurukeśa, was a cousin, close associate, and protégé of Rāmānuja's. In Piḷḷāṉ's works we see the genuine confluence of the Tamil and Sanskrit heritages of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. In our discussion of devotion in Piḷḷāṉ's commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi*,[1] a work that exemplifies the notion of Ubhaya-vedānta, we shall consider several issues. These will include Piḷḷāṉ's connection with Rāmānuja; his understanding of *bhakti-yoga;* his portrayal of *śaraṇāgati* as an act resulting from helplessness (*ākiñcanya*) and as an alternative way to get divine grace; his elucidation of the paradigmatic surrender of Nammāḻvār; the connection between *śaraṇāgati* and the Lord's grace; and the special relationship between the devotee (*āśrita*) and the Lord.

Piḷḷāṉ's commentary articulates certain concerns that implicitly challenge the traditional norms of Hindu culture. The first striking fact about the commentary is that it was written on a Tamil poem—a poem, moreover, composed by a person believed to have been born in the "fourth class" of society. By writing a commentary on a Tamil devotional work, the author challenges the traditional claim that Sanskrit is the exclusive vehicle of revelation and theological communication. The hierarchical class system that denied salvific knowledge to the *śūdra* is questioned in the assumption that Nammāḻvār is the paradigmatic devotee, whose name is synonymous with the Lord's grace.

Rāmānuja and Piḷḷāṉ

In his *Yatirāja-vaibhavam*,[2] Āndhra Pūrṇa describes Piḷḷāṉ's adoption as the spiritual son of Rāmānuja:

> Yatīśvara [Rāmānuja] went with Piḷḷāṉ, who was given to him voluntarily, and Govinda Bhaṭṭar, whom he begged for. They all joyfully went to Kāñci and then to Śrī-raṅgam.
> Once Yatīśvara was near the monastery, contemplating the meaning of the *Prabandha* [i.e., the works of the Āḻvārs]. Pūrṇa's son [Piḷḷāṉ] was

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thinking of the [same] meaning and, seeing Yatīśvara, told him about it.
Yatīśa was startled that [Piḷḷāṉ] knew the meaning he was thinking about. Then he said, "This is the greatness of Nātha's clan!" He embraced [Piḷḷāṉ] and said, "You are my spiritual son [*jñāna-putra*]."
This Kurukeśa [Piḷḷāṉ], who became known as the spiritual son and the sandals (i.e., the servant) of Rāmānuja, the king of ascetics, composed a commentary on the last *Prabandha* of Śrī Śaṭhāri [Nammāḻvār].
[Rāmānuja] bestowed [on Piḷḷāṉ] the name Kurukeśa ("Lord of Kurukūr[3]"), established the commentary of *The Six Thousand* that [Piḷḷāṉ] had composed on the one thousand verses, and thus fulfilled the third wish of Yāmuna.

(*Yatirāja-vaibhavam* 78, 81–84)

The Splendor calls Piḷḷāṉ Rāmānuja's *mānasa-putra*, his "son of the mind."[4] We have noted the account in *The Splendor* concerning Rāmānuja's authorizing Piḷḷāṉ to write his commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.[5] This commentary was celebrated by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, including *ācāryas* later regarded as Teṅkalai. Listen to Maṇavāḷa Māmuni:

My heart! Say at once
the names of the eminent teachers,
Piḷḷāṉ and others, so fit
to absorb the Sacred Word,
to expound its meaning,
so fit to graciously explain.

By the overpowering grace
of the king of ascetics,
Piḷḷāṉ, so wise, so clear,
made translucent, with love,
the inner meaning of Māraṉ's [Nammāḻvār's] *Vedas*.
This is the joyous *Six Thousand*.

(*Upadeśa-ratnamālai* 40–41)

The Six Thousand is the only work of Piḷḷāṉ that we have today, but it is possible that he composed other works or that his opinions and remarks were carefully preserved by oral tradition, because statements attributed to him in later works are not found in his commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*.[6]

According to Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, there was apparently a long history of oral commentaries on the *Tiruvāymoḷi*, and Piḷḷāṉ is said to have committed one to writing for the first time. This commentary is called the *Āṟāyirappaṭi*, or *The Six Thousand Paṭis*. The number refers to a unit of literary measurement called *paṭi*; each *paṭi* is thirty-two syllables long. Piḷḷāṉ's commentary is said to have

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32 × 6,000 (192,000) syllables, and was numerically modeled on the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa,* which is said to be of the same length. The commentary is written in Maṇipravāḷa, a hybrid of Sanskrit and Tamil. The word *maṇi-pravāḷa* means "gems and corals." Śrī Vaiṣṇava Maṇipravāḷa retains Tamil grammar and endings, though the sentences are heavily interspersed with Sanskrit words and phrases.[7]

Piḷḷāṉ elucidates the Tamil song of songs, the *Tiruvāymoḻi,* with words and categories very similar to those found in Rāmānuja's works. Long Sanskrit phrases from Rāmānuja's works are introduced into Piḷḷāṉ's commentary. In Appendix 5, we note in some detail the similarity between the styles of Rāmānuja and Piḷḷāṉ.

Piḷḷāṉ analyzes and explains the emotional, fervent poetry of the *Tvm* with the help of categories from Rāmānuja's works. For instance, in *Tvm* 4.7.9 Nammāḻvār merely says that he has not given in charity, conquered his five senses, or worshiped the Lord with flowers, but Piḷḷāṉ interprets this passage by using terminology typical of other Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas:*

> I have no *karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga,* or *bhakti-yoga* nor any *upāya* [that would qualify me] to see the Lord.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 4.7.9)[8]

Again, in *Tvm* 3.7.4, Nammāḻvār describes the Lord thus:

> He wears garments befitting him, and also a necklace . . . a gold [sacred] thread, a golden [crown on his] hair, and other ornaments suitable to him.

Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases this section in Rāmānuja's words:

> Flawlessly fragrant, flawlessly soft to the touch, flawlessly splendorous, with divine ornaments.[9]

Piḷḷāṉ's intertwining of Rāmānuja's thought and words into his commentary lends credence to the accounts of his close association with Rāmānuja. Piḷḷāṉ is brief, clear, and succinct, and I allow the material to speak for itself. In our discussions, we shall focus on the importance of the medium of a commentary, its intrinsic difference from the philosophical treatises of Rāmānuja and the *stotras* of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, and the way in which Piḷḷāṉ used it as a vehicle for his views.

The Six Thousand is obviously different from Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras;* there is less freedom in some ways, as Piḷḷāṉ has to be faithful to the spirit of the Tamil verses. But even given these parameters, Piḷḷāṉ makes his points easily and can be more daring because he is addressing an audience of faithful Śrī Vaiṣṇavas who are familiar with the *Tiruvāymoḻi*. Thus, while Rāmānuja speaks in conservative tones about God's dependence on the *bhakta,* Piḷḷāṉ asserts that the Lord gives himself entirely to the devotee (*āś-*

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rita). We also notice that the styles of Piḷḷāṉ and Kūrattāḻvāṉ are different: while Kūrattāḻvāṉ wrote impassioned poetry, leaving it up to the reader to glean theological issues from his confessional statements, Piḷḷāṉ skillfully uses the medium of commentarial prose to discuss several issues, and in many places he also interweaves long phrases of devotion from Rāmānuja's works.

Piḷḷāṉ on Bhakti-yoga

Piḷḷāṉ says that *bhakti-yoga* is an important teaching of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The second paragraph of the comment quoted below is of particular importance:

> To solve the controversy between the six sects [*camayam*],
> He, the one with countless good [attributes],
> explained the real way.
> The Lord, the primordial one, has no end.
>
> Stand in the worshipful path of penance;
> remove the weeds of the outer way.
> Dry the sticky [attachment to this world],
> heed his lesson, and know him.

If it is asked, "How can we establish his existence when there are so many divergent views?" [we say], "He who naturally possesses omniscience, etc., and all other auspicious attributes has himself graciously set forth in *Śrī Gītā* the real meaning of the way of the *Vedas:* that he is the person discussed in all the *Vedas* and their limbs and that since the other sects (*camayam*) are opposed to the *Vedas*, which are not of human origin and are faultless, [the other sects] cannot be valid sources of authority. He [revealed] this to the people of the six sects who are averse to him, and also to those followers of the *Vedas* who are favorable to him, in such a manner that the disagreement between them is resolved.

"The Lord has this great quality of making manifest the real meaning of the *Vedas*. Stand steadfast in *bhakti-yoga* on his side. Remove the weeds that are worldly objects; discard any association with them." If it is asked, "How can we leave them?" [the Āḻvār] says, "Through the *Gītā* that he graciously revealed, be conscious of him, whose *ātmā* has all the auspicious attributes, and discard the association of everything that is distinct from him."

(*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 1.3.5)

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It is significant to note, however, that immediately after this statement Piḷḷāṉ writes that if a person were to merely fold his hands in adoration, this act would be "better than *bhakti-yoga*" (1.3.8, quoted in full below).

Piḷḷāṉ also specifically mentions the "sacred *mantra*" (*tirumantra*), which refers to the "sacred eight syllables" in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. Piḷḷāṉ introduces the word *tirumantra* even when Nammāḻvār does not refer to it, and interestingly enough this is in the context of *bhakti-yoga:*[10]

> O you who desire to obtain
> Kaṇṇaṉ's feet,
> think of his sacred name.
> Nāraṇa is the mighty refuge.

Those who want to obtain the sacred feet of our Lord should only say the *tirumantra;* they will definitely reach his sacred feet.

(*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 10.5.1)

> Nāraṇa is my Lord;
> He is the husband
> of the goddess of the earth.
> He is the cause [of all],
> He, who destroyed the elephant.

If you ask, "Who is the Nārāyaṇa who is obtained by the *tirumantra*?" the Āḻvār replies, "He is the Lord of all, the cause of this world, the destroyer of the elephant."

(*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 10.5.2)

> He who reclines over the deep waters
> on the serpent who has a fearful mouth:
> He shall rule.
>
> Approach him every day;
> Place flowers at his feet.

Obtain the auspicious feet of my Lord by worshiping them daily with flowers; say the *tirumantra* at the sacred flowerlike feet of my Lord, who is in semi-slumber in the ocean of milk, having come there with the intention of protecting the world.

(*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 10.5.4)

Piḷḷāṉ equates the name of the Lord with the *tirumantra:*

> Come near him every day;
> bring flowers
> that do not wilt or fade;
> sing his name;
> you can even obtain heaven.

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> By saying the *tirumantra*, carrying flowers that do not wilt, and bowing daily before his sacred flowerlike feet, one can obtain his sacred flowerlike feet. This is certain.
>
> (*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 10.5.5)

It is important to note that Piḷḷāṉ regards these activities as part of *bhakti-yoga:*

> Grievous sins, which cause darkness,
> and fearful enemies will flee;
> offer beautiful flowers that grow in pools
> and think of the Lord.
>
> Say the *tirumantra* and take beautiful flowers to his sacred feet; offer them and think of him with affection (*sneha*). Thus the Āḻvār concludes [speaking of] the *bhakti-yoga* that he began speaking of earlier.
>
> (*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 10.5.10)

From these statements it seems clear that Piḷḷāṉ regarded the *tirumantra* as essential for *bhakti-yoga,* but we shall soon note that he also accepts a mantric substitute as *upāya*.

Helplessness, Confidence, and Alternative Ways

Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases the poet as stating that he is devoid of merit and any special quality and is really quite helpless to reach the Lord.

> I have not done any *karma-yoga, bhakti-yoga,* or *jñāna-yoga*. Not having performed them, I stand here calling to see you—you who are ever full (*paripūrṇa*) with innumerable wondrous qualities of the *ātmā* (*divyātma-guṇa*), such as excellent conduct (*sauśīlya*), tender maternal affection (*vātsalya*), mercy (*kāruṇya*), and innumerable qualities of your divine form, such as splendor (*aujjvalya*), beauty (*saundarya*), and fragrance (*saugandhya*). How will this call of mine result in my seeing you?
>
> (*Six Thousand* 3.2.8)

Piḷḷāṉ clearly paraphrases the Āḻvār as saying that he has not done any *bhakti-yoga,* but significantly enough, an apparently easy alternative to *bhakti-yoga* is suggested elsewhere. Adoration of the Lord by thought, word, or deed, is considered not just equal to, but *superior* to, *bhakti-yoga* itself:

> If we clean away the dirt in our minds and bow to the [sacred] feet that possess auspiciousness (*tiru uṭai aṭikal*), the old cruel sins (*viṉai*) sticking to us will end immediately. Now we lack nothing. Even if one folds one's hands [in salutation] at the time of death, that is a victory.

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> If, without any ulterior motive, we bow before the feet of the Lord, which possess auspiciousness, the constant wicked deeds we have done since time immemorial—deeds that obstruct our experience of the Lord—will vanish the very instant when we bow. Now we lack nothing: we can obtain and experience the Lord as we desire. If you ask, "If we have not done any *bhakti-yoga* and have not the time or the power, . . . [is everything lost] in the last moments of our life?" [Nammāḻvār] says, "Even in the last stages, to but fold one's hands or say a single sentence or think [of the Lord] is *better than bhakti-yoga*."
>
> (*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 1.3.8)

This is extremely significant, for here we have it in explicit terms by a contemporary of Rāmānuja himself that there is a "better" alternative for those who lack the qualifications for practicing *bhakti-yoga*. The last phrase, "better than *bhakti-yoga*," makes it clear that the gesture of folding one's hands in salutation is not merely ancillary, something to help one get the necessary qualifications for *bhakti-yoga;* rather, it is a clear alternative. Although the Āḻvār has not suggested that the actions he mentions are better than *bhakti-yoga*, Piḷḷāṉ explicitly says so.

There are other passages, however, where the connection between devotional activities and *bhakti-yoga* seems more ambiguous. Let us consider a verse from the *Tiruvāymoḻi:*

> Singing about the Lord who knows no grief,
> O you who desire to grow,[11]
> Ceaselessly sprinkle pure water
> And offer incense and flowers.
>
> (*Tvm* 1.6.1)

Piḷḷāṉ interprets this verse as follows:

> To the person who, through the unsurpassed love (*niravadhika-prīti*) that is born out of the experience of the Lord's qualities, . . . considers the supreme Lord, who is opposed to all filth, as one who destroys all obstacles,
> who desires to become fortunate by singing *Tiruppallāṇṭu*[12] [to the Lord] at all times and to never part from him,
> who wants to commence *bhakti-yoga*, which is the *upāya* for this, but who does not practice it and is despondent because it is exceedingly difficult to get the accessories that are held in esteem for *bhakti-yoga* and because it is not possible for him to practice *bhakti-yoga* in an unimpaired way,
> the [Āḻvār] says, "Take a flower or leaf that is easily available (*sarvasulabha*) and do any [act of] service to his sacred feet. Out of his unsurpassed *sauśīlya* he will accept it. Therefore, do not be despondent,

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> thinking that the accessories for his worship are extremely difficult or that it is impossible to worship faultlessly. Just serve him."
>
> (*Six Thousand* 1.6.1)

Here it is not immediately clear whether the devotional offering is an aid to, or substitute for, *bhakti-yoga*. More significant are other passages, where we see Piḷḷāṉ accept a mantric substitute to attain the Lord, while talking of the easiest *upāya* for reaching him:

> It is our duty to say *namaḥ* to the Lord who resides in Vēṅkaṭam; thus the strong sins and [the results] of the deeds done by our body [will vanish] . . . and we can do good [deeds].
>
> (*Tvm* 3.3.6)

> If you ask, "What is the *upāya* to get this object [the Lord]?" [Nammāḻvār] says, "Say the word *namaḥ* to the Lord who resides at Vēṅkaṭam, the Lord who rules all and is yet accessible, and the sins that prevent loving service (*kaiṅkarya*) to him . . . will vanish and you can do all that you deem to be high."
>
> (*Six Thousand* 3.3.6)

Namaḥ is the Sanskrit term of adoration, of seeking refuge, and is the middle term of the "sacred eight syllables" the Āḻvārs spoke about. *Namaḥ* is preceded in the *tirumantra* by the sacred syllable *aum*.[13] Saying this sacred word seems to suffice, and the mood seen in Rāmānuja's *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* is clearly seen in Piḷḷāṉ's commentary on the verse quoted above. Earlier we saw the importance that Piḷḷāṉ attached to saying the *tirumantra* in the context of *bhakti-yoga*, but from his comments on the importance of *namaḥ* and from his approval of the idea that "bowing before the Lord is better than *bhakti-yoga*," it seems clear that he also accepted other, alternative ways as being able to lead one to the supreme goal of loving service.

Piḷḷāṉ asserts several times that the Lord will save the *āśrita* who has taken refuge in him:

> If you ask, "If we thus take refuge, will he pay heed?" [Nammāḻvār] says, "He who is very accessible gave his auspicious feet to the lowly Brahmā and Īśa (Śiva), who long for wealth, so they could take refuge in him without hindrance. Will he then abandon those who take refuge in him without expecting any reward?"
>
> (*Six Thousand* 3.6.4)

Nammāḻvār assures his heart that the Lord will not desert them:

> "We both [my heart and I] obtained a vision of the Lord; what will we do if he leaves us now? . . . But if you and I stand thus, not leaving him, he

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who is the father and mother of all souls,
who is the master of all,
who is easily accessible to his devotees (*āśrita-sulabham*),
who is united with us,
will never leave us at any time." He [Nammāḻvār] says, "O my heart, have confidence in me."

(*Six Thousand* 1.10.6)

Piḷḷāṉ has paraphrased Nammāḻvār as saying that any goal can be reached by taking refuge in the Lord; but the best person is one who takes refuge for no selfish reason. The Lord will never abandon such a devotee. This confidence in the Lord is striking:

Even if one is generous and is steeped in royal duties (*kṣatriya-dharma*), involved in matters of the state, one cannot hold on to a country unless he takes refuge in the Lord. Even if one takes refuge, gets [this goal], and enjoys it for some time, it is temporary. Therefore, grasp as the goal the auspicious feet of the Lord, which will never let go of the people who clutch them. If you ask, "Will [the Lord] abandon those who grasp his feet?" [Nammāḻvār] says, "Only if he lets go of Tiruvanaṇṭāḻvāṉ [the serpent Ananta, the paradigmatic *śeṣa*] will he let go those who grasp his feet!" [i.e., he will never abandon them].[14]

(*Six Thousand* 4.1.6)

If one considers materialistic objects and wealth to be mean and temporary, will paradise (*svarga*) be a goal? One has to renounce worldly pleasures completely, conquer the sense organs, and renounce the body, which is a hindrance for paradise (*svarga*), but still, unless one takes refuge in the Lord, the wealth of *svarga*, etc., will not be obtained. Even if one takes refuge in the Lord and procures it, it is temporary. Therefore discard this wealth, which is mean and temporary, which brings sorrow, and which is not a goal, and grasp the feet of the Lord, which may let Periya Tiruvaṭi[15] (Garuḍa) down, but never, in any way, ever let down one who has sought his refuge.

(*Six Thousand* 4.1.9)

In the *Sundara-bāhu-stava*, Kūrattāḻvāṉ sought refuge in the Lord in order to be united with Rāmānuja; here Piḷḷāṉ talks of lesser goals, such as wealth and residence in a temporary paradise (*svarga*), which can be achieved through *śaraṇāgati*. But most commendable is he who seeks the Lord for himself; the Lord will save such a person. In fact, the mercy of the Lord is such that he cannot help but save such an *āśrita:*

If the Lord's unsurpassed sea of mercy (*karuṇā*) breaks its banks and floods, even the Lord cannot stop it. If you ask, "But he is omnipotent;

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is there anything he cannot do?" [Nammāḻvār] says, "If he is strong, let him try to stop it!"

(*Six Thousand* 5.1.1)

The Lord cannot resist showering his mercy on a devotee who seeks him for himself. Piḷḷāṉ portrays Nammāḻvār as having this absolute confidence in the Lord's saving grace.

The Paradigmatic Prapatti: Tvm 6.10.10

Piḷḷāṉ sees Nammāḻvār's helplessness and his faith in the Lord's grace as leading to *prapatti*. Nammāḻvār said in several verses that he was taking refuge in the Lord; Piḷḷāṉ, however, considers just one verse in the *Tvm* as the place where Nammāḻvār formally seeks refuge. I quote here both Piḷḷāṉ's introduction to *Tvm* 6.10 and his comment on the tenth verse in that set, which is so celebrated by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community:

> And so, though [the Āḻvār] calls the Lord so loudly that he could be heard in the Sacred Land [Vaikuṇṭha], he does not obtain a vision of him. He thinks: "The only *upāya* to see him is to seek refuge at his sacred feet; there is no other way." [Understanding] the Lord's qualities such as compassion (*kāruṇya*) and maternal love (*vātsalya*) to be his refuge (*paṟṟācu*), and holding the Divine Mother [Śrī] to be his mediator, he takes refuge at the sacred feet of the Lord at Tiruvēṅkaṭam—the Lord who is the refuge of all the world.
>
> (*Six Thousand*, introduction to *Tvm* 6.10)

Later, in the tenth verse of the 6.10 decade, Nammāḻvār says that he seeks protection at the feet of the Lord. As Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases it, this is the verse in which the poet formally seeks refuge. Let us consider the verse and the commentary:

> O you on whose breast
> resides the lady of the flower,
> who says
> she cannot move away from you
> for even a split second!
>
> O incomparably famous one,
> O you who own the three worlds!
> My ruler!
>
> O Lord of sacred Vēṅkaṭam,
> desired by the peerless immortals and sages!

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I, your servant, who am without shelter,
sat at your feet and took refuge.

(*Tvm* 6.10.10

You are "an ocean of unbounded compassion." By your qualities, you are my master.

On the Sacred Hill (Tirumalai), which is desired by the peerless, perfect, immortal ones whose only enjoyment is to serve you and rejoice in ["experience"] your attributes in the Sacred Land (Tirunāṭu),

Deeming you to be the refuge of all the worlds and all entities without distinction,

I, your servant, who am without refuge, without any other goal, behold the divine mother as the mediator
and take refuge at your sacred feet.

Now, immediately, with all my obstacles gone, I, your servant, desire to do every possible [act] of loving service at all times.

(*Six Thousand* 6.10.10)

I would like to emphasize the following four points from these passages: (a) The Lord's auspicious qualities lead one immediately to *śaraṇāgati*. (b) *Śaraṇāgati* is an *upāya*. (c) The Lord's consort, Śrī, the Divine Mother (Tamil: *pirāṭṭi*), is the mediator, or *puruṣakāra*, through whom one reaches the Lord. (d) One must perform *śaraṇāgati* without an ulterior motive, but with a longing for *kaiṅkarya*.

Piḷḷāṉ never loses an opportunity to talk about the auspicious qualities of the Lord. He paraphrases Nammāḻvār earlier in the *Tvm* as saying, "We have succumbed to the auspicious qualities of the Lord, which are most accessible to those who seek refuge in him (*āśrita-sulabhatvādi-guṇa*), and have become his slaves" (*Six Thousand* 2.1.7). We shall return to this point later, when we talk of the relationship between the devotee and the Lord.[16]

Piḷḷāṉ specifically says that *śaraṇāgati* is an *upāya* for one who has no refuge but the Lord. Dr. Lester says that "*prapatti* as *upāya* . . . centrally characterize[s] the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* from the thirteenth century to the present time."[17] He also states that "the commentaries [on the *Tvm*] show that the notion of *prapattti* as *mokṣopāya* did not come into prominence until at least one hundred years later than Rāmānuja."[18] Drawing his conclusions from the commentaries on two verses in the *Tvm*, Lester argues that Rāmānuja's contemporaries (he quotes Piḷḷāṉ and Nanjīyar[19]) do not support the theory of *prapatti* as a *mokṣopāya* but that later commentators do. We hope it is clear from the passage quoted from Piḷḷāṉ's work itself that Piḷḷāṉ explicitly held *prapatti* to be an *upāya*. Kūrattāḻvāṉ also believed that his "words of surrender" were a *sādhana* for reaching the Lord, and it seems clear that *prapatti* was regarded as an *upāya* long before the thirteenth century.

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Yāmuna and Kūrattāḻvāṉ wrote hymns to Śrī in which they surrender to her. Piḷḷāṉ specifically calls her a mediator (*puruṣakāra*) in the passages we just quoted. On the basis of this evidence we may assume that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community worshiped Śrī at least from the early eleventh century— approximately the time of Yāmuna—and understood her to be *puruṣakāra* at least from the late eleventh or early twelfth century.[20]

In several verses Piḷḷāṉ makes it clear that Śrī is a figure whose intercession will favorably aid the petitioner's case. He paraphrases Nammāḻvār:

> "In my sorrow at being parted from him, a chill wind passes through me like a thread needling through a bone —and the Lord does not think of his grace (*kṛpā*) but of my mistakes. [O parrot!] Ask this of him: Even if I have erred, is there any mistake that would make me unworthy of his grace? . . . Even if he refuses, . . . don't you know that you must tell this to him in front of the Divine Mother?"
>
> (*Six Thousand* 4.4.7)

> "[O birds!] Do not tell [the Lord] about my condition when he is in the Sacred Court, for he is apt to be absentminded then. When he has left the court and is in the auspicious inner chamber [where women abide], there, in the presence of the Divine Mother, tell him, for it will then move his heart. Get his gracious reply and tell it to me." Thus says [Nammāḻvār] to the swans which are uniting ecstatically with each other.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 6.8.10)

Piḷḷāṉ makes explicit some sentiments that were implicit in the works of Yāmuna and Kūrattāḻvāṉ. The first is that association with those dear to the Lord enhances one's chances of reaching him. Piḷḷāṉ sees other devotees, and even other deities, as mediators between the soul and the Lord:

> *The words of the concerned friend:*
>
> Worship the sacred feet
> of the Lord of the celestials
> with those who know the *Vedas*
> and cure this girl's disease.
>
> Instead,
> you speak improper words,
> do improper deeds.
>
> You sprinkle liquor, your kettledrum roars,
> You dance in ecstasy—
> all this is base.

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Instead of taking refuge with Śrī Vaiṣṇavas and using them as mediators (*puruṣakāra*) so you can take refuge with the Lord, thus curing the disease of this girl, you say improper [words], do improper deeds, sprinkle liquor, sing songs, and dance possessed. All this is base.

(*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 4.6.8)

While paraphrasing another verse, Piḷḷāṉ portrays the god Śiva as a *puruṣakāra* between the soul and the Lord:

When Mārkaṇṭēya sought his feet as refuge,
the naked god [Śiva] gave him life
through Nārāyaṇa's grace.
The supreme, primordial Lord stands in Tirukkurukūr,
where cranes perch
on fences of fragrant blossoms.
How can you talk of other gods?

If it is asked, "Didn't Mārkaṇṭēya have his wish fulfilled by taking refuge with Rudra [Śiva]?" [the Āḻvār] says, "His wish was fulfilled by the grace (*prasāda*) of Nārāyaṇa. Rudra was only a mediator (*puruṣakāra*); therefore what god can you praise other than Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of all?"

(*Tvm* and *Six Thousand* 4.10.8)

Thus Piḷḷāṉ sees other gods, Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotees, and Śrī as mediators between the soul and the Lord. We may recall that in our discussions on Yāmuna we noted that he deemed association with those close to the Lord as desirable, and he pleaded for the Lord's grace on the basis of such association.

The longed-for goal is to render at all times every kind of loving service (*kaiṅkarya*) to the Lord. Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Yāmuna petitioned the Lord for this service, and the Āḻvārs had longed for it. Piḷḷāṉ's paraphrase of *Tvm* 6.10.10, in which he expresses the Āḻvār's desire to serve the Lord continuously, reflects the sentiments prevalent in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community of the period. We emphasize this point here because of recent allegations that the concept of *nityakaiṅkarya* became prominent only in later centuries.[21]

Śaraṇāgati and the Lord's Grace

Piḷḷāṉ regards a human being's effort as insignificant in the face of the Lord's might, and he sees one's effort (*yatna*) to reach him as having little value:

[The Lord] asks, "Why can't you practice the *upāyas* to realize [i.e., reach] me?" [The Āḻvār] replies, "You are the soul (*ātmā*) of all the worlds. How can I reach you through my effort?"

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> [The Lord] asks, "If I am to fulfill your desire, shouldn't you at least fold your palms together in salutation?" [The Āḻvār says,] "You are the *ātmā*, and I am your body, . . . so I cannot do anything. I do not know how to bow."
> "I have not done anything; there is no way/goal (*gati*) for me other than you; am I to procure your sacred feet through my effort? I do not want to reach them by any *upāya* other than your grace (*kṛpā*); after that, graciously see to it that as long as this soul (*ātmā*) exists, it is not separated from your sacred feet."
>
> (*Six Thousand* 8.1.5, 6.1.8, 5.7.3)

A central feature of Rāmānuja's theology was that the Lord is the soul of the cosmos,[22] and Piḷḷāṉ elaborates on this concept in his comment on *Tvm* 1.1.7.[23] Here he states that the relationship of the Lord to the cosmos indicates his supremacy and the insignificance of one's effort to reach him. Piḷḷāṉ regards the only *upāya* for reaching him to be his grace, and this becomes central to the understanding of *prapatti* in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.

It is only the Lord's grace (*kṛpā*) that can effect salvation:

> [The Āḻvār says,] "If you say that there are obstacles to my realizing the object, you can graciously remove them yourself, just as you removed the obstacles preventing your union with Mother Nappiṉṉai and with the Divine Mother [Sītā] in Aśokavana. Draw me to your sacred feet immediately, and graciously see to it that I am inseparable from them, like the wondrous lines on them. If you do not do this at once, I will not survive."
>
> (*Six Thousand* 2.9.10)

If the individual's gesture is not worth much, does that mean a human being has no part to play in the process of his own salvation? Let us consider Piḷḷāṉ's position in some detail.

Piḷḷāṉ often uses the word *nirhetuka* ("without reason") in the context of the Āḻvār receiving "the feet of the Lord." To the best of my knowledge, this word does not occur in conjunction with the word *kṛpā*, as it does in later years, but Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases Nammāḻvār as saying that he "received the Lord's feet" even when he apparently did not deserve them:

> "I, who am sunk in this earth, which is an obstruction to my union with you, obtained your sacred feet—without reason (*nirhetuka*). Having obtained them, I was encouraged. I drowned in a flood of infinite and beautiful happiness. You, whose essential nature is to fulfill the devotees' desires, should not disappoint me."
> Thus [Nammāḻvār] states his wish.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 2.6.8)

At this point, Nammāḻvār seems to be overwhelmed by the Lord's grace and

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overcome at the thought of the mighty ruler being mindful of a human being and lifting up a worthless one. As far as I can perceive, in two places Piḷḷāṉ gives examples of possible "gestures" an individual can make to reach the Lord's feet. The first is one's affection and friendship (*sneha*) for the Lord, the second one's ardent desire to reach him. Piḷḷāṉ mentions the first gesture in the context of a discussion on why some people do not take refuge in the Lord:

> Why does everyone not recognize him—him who has such [auspicious] qualities—and take refuge in him? It is because he deludes those who have no attachment (*sneha*) for him, and thus they cannot realize his real nature.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 1.3.9)

Later, Piḷḷāṉ says that the *desire* the devotee has for the Lord is the "reason" for the Lord's showering his grace on him. But even this desire, concedes Piḷḷāṉ, comes ultimately from the Lord's grace:

> What was the reason (*hetu*) for the Lord to graciously act thus? The only reason (*kāraṇa*) was my desire (*icchā*). Yet even that did not come from me; even that came from his favor (*prasāda*).
> I desired to serve the Lord. The Lord, who has intense love (*vyāmoha*) for his devotees, used only this as a reason and graciously banished all my *karma*—my good deeds and my sins (*puṇya-pāpa-rūpa-karmaṅkal*)—without leaving a trace. I desire only to be with this Lord's servants; I do not want even the wondrous three worlds.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 8.8.3, 8.10.1)

A person who wants salvation must have affection (*sneha*) for the Lord and/or a desire (*icchā*) to obtain the Lord's feet, but even these sentiments arise from the Lord's favor. It is the Lord's favor and grace that accomplish everything, and to one who loves him, the Lord gives everything. Throughout the commentary Piḷḷāṉ emphasizes the special relationship between a devotee and the Lord.

The Devotee and the Lord

Piḷḷāṉ expresses most of his opinions by paraphrasing the poetry of Nammāḻvār. So heightened is Piḷḷāṉ's sense of the love between the devotee and the Lord that he uses any excuse, any phrase in the *Tiruvāymoḻi*, to describe the Lord's love for the *āśrita* (one who is devoted to him or one who has sought his shelter). The poetry may barely hint at the sentiment; the commentary makes it explicit. Later commentators follow Piḷḷāṉ's interpretation. Let us consider, for instance, *Tvm* 1.5.6. I have translated the text of the verse phrase by phrase and followed each with Piḷḷāṉ's comment. Where the connection between the phrase and the commentary is not immediately obvious, I have supplied the explanation within parentheses:

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Tvm: You are the medicine to cure my [good and bad] actions (*viṇai*)!
Six Thousand: O you with excellent virtues (*sauśīlya*) who banished my endless actions, the obstructions to my union with you!
Tvm: O leader of the celestials!
Six Thousand: O generous one, who keep giving yourself to the immortals who know no forgetfulness![24]
Tvm: O Keśava!
Six Thousand: O you who destroyed the enemies of your *āśritas*! [Keśī was a demon who harassed Viṣṇu's devotees. Kṛṣṇa killed him and acquired the name Keśava].
Tvm: O leader who lived with the clan of cowherds!
Six Thousand: O you who came to the place where the *āśritas* lived and became accessible to them!
Tvm: O great wondrous one (*mā-māyanē*)!
Six Thousand: O you who have exceeding passion (*vyāmoha*) for your *āśritas*!
Tvm: O Mādhava!
Six Thousand: O you who can be exceedingly enjoyed! [The name Mādhava is split as Mā-dhava, the consort of Mā, or Śrī, who is said to "enjoy" the Lord fully.]
Tvm: O you who knocked down the seven trees with branches!
Six Thousand: O you who are under the orders of your devotees! [Rāma knocked down seven trees to prove his valor to his devotee Sugrīva.]
Tvm: O Śrīdhara!
Six Thousand: O you who are naturally united with Śrī! [The name Śrīdhara is split to mean "the supporter of Śrī."]
Tvm: O you of several forms and names!
Six Thousand: O you who have several other qualities!
Tvm: [Speaking thus,] I bow before you!
Six Thousand: Since I have not procured your feet, I cry! Please grant me your grace so I can join your flowerlike feet, which ooze honey!

The Lord banishes and destroys the sins of those who seek refuge in him. Piḷḷāṉ describes him as "one who by his very nature banishes the faults of his devotees (*āśritas*), which are hindrances to their union with him" (*Six Thousand* 2.3.9).

The Lord is full of love for his devotees and apparently cannot survive without them; Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases Nammāḻvār:

> He [the Lord] adorned himself with cool *tulasī* leaves to unite with me, and with the nature of one who cannot survive even for a moment without me, he entered my tongue.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 1.9.7)

Despite the supremacy and independence of the Lord, he seems to be emotionally dependent on the devotees' love:

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> The Lord is the only cause for all the worlds and the protector of all the worlds, . . . [yet he is] dependent on the devotee who has sought refuge in him (*āśrita-paratantran*).
>
> (*Six Thousand* 2.7.12)

The Lord stands in the temple just to give himself to the *āśritas:*

> O generous one who have entered a temple and [in the posture of being] asleep given your soul (*ātmā*) to your *āśritas*!
>
> (*Six Thousand* 7.2.10)

His forgiving love for his devotees knows no bounds:

> Thus, ignoring my faults, banishing all my great sins, which were obstructions to my union [with him], saying that he is the *way and the goal* (*prāpakamum prāpyamum*), . . . correcting me and later giving me the Auspicious Land. . . . [The Lord thus shows] his omniscient (*sarva-jñatva*), omnipotent (*sarva-śaktitva*), supremely gracious (*parama-kāruṇitva*) love for his devotees (*āśrita-vatsalatva*).
>
> (*Six Thousand* 1.5.10)

And after all this, the Lord still feels as if he has done nothing for those who have sought his refuge. Significantly, Piḷḷāṉ says the Lord directs all these generous acts toward his *āśritas*—all those who have sought refuge in him—and not necessarily toward those who practice *bhakti-yoga:*

> And thus he becomes the protector—not just in one way but in all ways—of those who grasped his sacred feet as the *upāya*. Immediately he wants to liberate them from this earth (*prakṛti*) and take them to the Wondrous Land, and he feels he cannot exist without uniting with them. But [the humans] have been part of this *prakṛti* since time immemorial. . . . [When the bonds are loosened] the Lord gives them the Sacred Land, and then, because of the love they have for him, he feels he has done nothing for them. He says, "What can I do for them?"[25]
>
> (*Six Thousand* 9.10.5)

The reason the Lord cannot leave Nammāḻvār, Piḷḷāṉ says, is not only that the Āḻvār is his devotee but also that he is a servant of the Divine Mother, Nappiṉṉai:

> "Since he [the Lord] has love for this devotee (*āśrita-vatsalan*), he does not leave me. Even if he thinks of leaving me because of my bad qualities, it is not possible even for the Lord of all to leave my heart. And because of my connection with my heart, he cannot leave me. And why can he not leave my heart? It is because it is a slave to Mother Nappiṉṉai." Thus he [Nammāḻvār] says.
>
> (*Six Thousand* 1.7.8)

The Lord and the *āśrita* share a deep love for the same "woman" (Nappiṉṉai)

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and fully enjoy each other in their shared love. Nammāḻvār frequently hails the Lord as his "supreme enjoyment" (*enatu parama-bhōgyame!—Six Thousand* 2.8.4)

Piḷḷāṉ began the commentarial tradition on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, a tradition that continues even today. That he singles out *Tvm* 6.10.10 as the instance where Nammāḻvār ritually surrenders to the Lord at Tiruvēṅkaṭam, and also portrays that verse as a description of a paradigmatic act of *prapatti* containing all the crucial elements, is a significant development in the understanding of the Āḻvār poetry and *śaraṇāgati*. Piḷḷāṉ, like Rāmānuja, sees *bhakti-yoga* as a way to reach the Lord; but at the same time he offers several alternate routes as well. These alternate routes include worshiping the Lord, folding one's hands in reverence, and chanting his divine name. Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, the son of Kūrattāḻvāṉ and a younger disciple of Rāmānuja, emphasizes the last point and speaks at length on the importance of singing the divine name.

In the last three chapters we have discussed three important theologians of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community who were contemporaries—Rāmānuja, Kūrattāḻvāṉ, and Piḷḷāṉ—in order to explore their understandings of *bhakti, bhakti-yoga,* and *prapatti*. We discussed examples of various types of literature and noted the indebtedness of Rāmānuja and his associates to the poems of the Āḻvārs. We also highlighted the similarities in style and content among these theologians' works along with the common concerns they shared with Yāmuna. In our discussion on Piḷḷāṉ we saw a new genre of literature: a commentary written on a Tamil hymn in the "situational language" of Maṇipravāḷa. In the writings of this generation we find the beginnings of the twin (*ubhaya*) Vedānta and the confluence of Sanskrit and Tamil literature. The early *ācāryas* understood *bhakti-yoga* as it was interpreted by Yāmuna and regarded the "words of surrender" as an alternative to *bhakti-yoga* for reaching the Lord. It is remarkable that despite their acceptance of *bhakti-yoga,* all the teachers confess their inability to practice the discipline and instead seek refuge in the Lord's feet. Devotion to one's teacher and service to devotees are prominent themes in the writings, but above all we get a sense of the intimate relationship that exists between a devotee and the Lord. This last theme is developed by Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, the son of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, as we shall now see.

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6

Parāśara Bhaṭṭar: Singing the Divine Name

Parāśara Bhaṭṭar was the son of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, a disciple of Empār,[1] and a protégé of Rāmānuja. He lived for twenty-eight years[2] and wrote several works. According to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava hagiography, *The Splendor,* he was a precocious youth and a pious successor to Rāmānuja. In his Sanskrit *stotras* we glimpse the emotional ties that bind him to his father and other teachers; from his descriptions of the Śrī-raṅgam temple we get a feel for the physical milieu in which these great spiritual *ācāryas* lived. Bhaṭṭar continues the Ubhaya-vedānta tradition in his Sanskrit and Maṇipravāḷa writings. We understand more about Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotion by studying his works.

Bhaṭṭar wrote hymns (*stotras*) in honor of the Lord at Śrī-raṅgam. The *Śrīraṅga-rāja-stava* (*ŚrS*), or "Hymn to Śrīraṅgarāja," is in two parts—the "earlier hundred" (*pūrva-śaṭaka,* henceforth *p*) and "later hundred" (*uttara-śaṭaka,* henceforth *u*). Like Yāmuna and Kūrattāḻvāṉ, Bhaṭṭar also composed a *stotra* in honor of Śrī (*Śrī-guṇa-ratna-kośa*), but unlike the *Four Verses* of Yāmuna and the *Śrī-stava* of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, which is only twelve verses long, Bhaṭṭar's *Śrī-guṇa-ratna-kośa,* a companion piece to *Śrīraṅga-rāja-stava,* extends a full sixty-one verses. Bhaṭṭar also commented upon the section in the *Mahābhārata* known as "The Thousand Names of Viṣṇu" (*Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*). His is the first Śrī Vaiṣṇava commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma,* and is still considered a very important work. Bhaṭṭar's comments on one verse of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's poem *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* was recorded and is still available.[3] In this chapter, we shall consider the importance of devotion in the writings of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar and make extensive use of his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* as well as his *stotras*. Our discussion of Bhaṭṭar's understanding and expression of *bhakti* will conclude our study of devotion in the formative years of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, during which the foundations of the Ubhaya-vedānta were laid.

A study of Bhaṭṭar's works reveals his reverence for his teachers (*ācārya-bhakti*), his concept of the discipline of *bhakti-yoga,* and his glorification of "an alternate path" to reach the Lord. This alternate to *bhakti-yoga* is the path of loving devotion (*bhakti*) manifested through the adoration of the Lord and the singing of his name. Bhaṭṭar also confesses his lack of ability to practice

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bhakti-yoga and meditates on his lowliness. He discusses the importance of the "transference of one's burden" (*bhara-nyāsa*) to the Lord in the matter of salvific effort. Occasionally he refers to the ritual aspects of *prapatti*, which become part of the *pañca-saṁskāra* ("five sacraments") ceremony in later years. In Bhaṭṭar's writings we see the continuation of a theme his father extolled: the celebration of the special relationship between the Lord and his beloved devotee.

Ācārya-bhakti

Bhaṭṭar clearly establishes his close connection with several Śrī Vaiṣṇava teachers, expressing his respect for the *ācāryas* in two ways. In the *stotras* he begins with what had by this time become the literary tradition in Śrī Vaiṣṇavism: a ritual obeisance to one's *gurus* and an identification of oneself as their disciple. Second, in his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* (henceforth *Vsb*) he quotes his father and his *ācāryas* as authorities to settle points of dispute. This canonizing of the works of the previous generations in the formative years of the community is significant.[4]

Bhaṭṭar starts his *Śrīraṅga-rāja-stava* with several verses of benediction (*maṅgala-ślokas*) on his *ācāryas*—Kūrattāḻvāṉ, Empār, Rāmānuja, Yāmuna, and Nammāḻvār. He expresses his obeisance to his father, Śrīvatsāṅka Miśra (Kūrattāḻvāṉ):

> I say the word *namaḥ* to Śrīvatsāṅka Miśra, whose words formed an auspicious thread (*maṅgala-sūtra*) for the *Vedas*.[5]
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 1)

In the following verse he glowingly describes Govinda Bhaṭṭar (Empār), and in the third verse focuses on Rāmānuja and his *bhakti:*

> Victory to the sage Rāmānuja, who through his device (*yantra*) called *bhakti* drove away the gory play of the demon of Kali-yuga.[6]
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 3)

Just as Yāmuna had described Nāthamuni as being the person through whom *bhakti-yoga* descended to this earth, similarly Bhaṭṭar's primary association with Rāmānuja right from his own time was his *bhakti*. The next few verses focus on the devotion of Yāmuna, Nāthamuni, and Nammāḻvār. The verse on Nammāḻvār is significant:

> I bow before that sage (*ṛṣi*) who intuited the *brahma-saṁhitā* of a thousand verses in the Draviḍa [language] and who knew the truth of thirst for Kṛṣṇa.
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 6)

Bhaṭṭar clearly refers to the *Tiruvāymoḻi* as a *brahma-saṁhitā* (i.e., *Veda*) that

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was "intuited" by the Āḻvār, and he emphasizes the revealed nature of the hymns.

Bhaṭṭar describes himself as a scion of a *vaṁśa* ("family") whose strength derives primarily from seeking refuge in the Lord. Bhaṭṭar recalls his family's fame as a compensation for his own lack of worth; it is only because of his connection to this *vaṁśa* that he even dares to describe and sing of the Lord:

> But because I have been born in a family where my ancestors had the strength of *prapatti* and the wondrous quality of Viṣṇu, I begin my hymn of praise. Or else Śrī Raṅgarāja and his lady of the lotus may be held responsible [for my audacity to compose this prayer]. I have been raised at their feet and [am so bold] as to start this hymn.
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 17)

Here is yet another instance in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature of the claim to biological and spiritual relationships and using them as a premise for soliciting divine grace. Maturakavi Āḻvār described the grace of Nammāḻvār. Yāmuna sought refuge with his grandfather and asked the Lord to accept him on behalf of his biological and spiritual relationship with Nāthamuni. Kūrattāḻvāṉ sought refuge in Rāmānuja and lamented in the *Vaikuṇṭha-stava* that though he was "accepted" by his *guru*, he was still an unworthy person. In the *Sundara-bāhu-stava*, Kūrattāḻvāṉ sought the favor of the Lord through the hierarchy of his spiritual masters. This dependence on one's *ācārya* to compensate for one's unworthiness has continued in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. Bhaṭṭar takes refuge in "the glances" of his *ācāryas;* their grace, he feels, makes him worthy of the Lord:

> With their pure, beautiful glances my teachers made even me pure, [fit to be] an offering to the Lord . . . I take refuge in their glances and worship them.
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 48)

Unlike Maturakavi Āḻvār, who praised only Nammāḻvār, his earthly teacher, Bhaṭṭar also writes hymns in praise of the Lord.

The Alternate Path

Bhaṭṭar distinguishes three kinds of "means" (*upāyas*); these he calls *siddha, sādhya* and *sālambana*. The *siddha-upāya* is the means that already exists—in this case, the Lord himself. Bhaṭṭar says that the Lord can be worshiped in two ways: the easy and the difficult. The easy way is to sing his praise, the hard way is to meditate on him through *bhakti-yoga*. *Sādhya-upāya* is the means which is accomplished, and includes repeating prayers, worship, etc. *Sālambana-upāya* is the means that involves the various articles used for worship, like flowers,

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incense, and *mantra*.[7] Our discussion will now focus on the "difficult" and "easy" ways of attaining the Lord.

In his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-bhāṣya*, Bhaṭṭar talks of both the discipline of *bhakti-yoga* and *bhakti*, or loving devotion. *Bhakti* is hailed as the "highest of *dharmas*" people can pursue. When Yudhiṣṭhira, the oldest Pāṇḍava brother, asks Bhīṣma, "What is the highest of all *dharmas*?" Bhīṣma replies that it is *bhakti*. *Bhakti* involves service to the Lord:

> Lexicographers say that *bhakti*, meditation (*upāsanā*), and service (*sevā*) are synonyms. In the *Liṅga* and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇas* it is said that "*bhaj*, the root, is explained in terms of *sevā*." . . . Therefore the enlightened have used the term *bhakti* to mean *sevā*. Meditation is also called *bhakti* when it is in the form of unlimited love (*prīti*) toward him who is faultless and has great qualities, and gives rise in the worshiper to a taste for service, on account of the Lord being a master.
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 15)

Bhakti-yoga is described as a discipline that needs several ancillaries:

> This very *bhakti-yoga* . . . was thought of as the road to liberation [in scripture]. Lord Bādarāyaṇa has said in the *Brahma-sūtras* [on the basis of scripture] that worship leads to release. The ancillaries of this [*bhakti-yoga*] are the works enjoined for one according to his caste and station in life (*varṇāśrama-dharma*), which are fundamentally helpful, and discipline and control (*śama* and *dama*), which are qualities of the *ātmā* and are of immediate help. These enable one to have cognizance of . . . knowledge (*vedana*), meditation (*dhyāna*), continuous remembrance (*dhruvānusmṛti*), discrimination (*viveka*), etc. . . . If performed in light of the special qualities of the Lord, as is enjoined in the superior knowledge (*para-vidyā*) stated in the [various] *vidyās*, it will . . . lead to a continuous and constant flow of images, which if practiced . . . will lead to a realization of the Lord. . . . Like the performance of a sacrifice, [*bhakti-yoga*] requires many ancillaries to be successful, just as a horse [needs reins, saddle, etc., before it can be ridden].
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 15)

Bhakti-yoga is described, however, as being difficult, and Bhaṭṭar shows an alternate path for those unable to practice it:

> Alas! This *bhakti-yoga*, it is said, is [difficult; as the *Gītā* (7.19) says], "The wise man comes to me after many births." [In the *Viṣṇu-dharma* it is said,] "After a thousand births this is so." [*Bhakti-yoga*] becomes firm and steady after . . . a long time of service, . . . to those whose minds are filled with the merit of several births. [Bhīṣma] answers the third question [of Yudhiṣṭhira], showing an easy path (*laghūpāya*) to

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remove the fear of those who feel unable to perform any of the *upāyas* enjoined in the *śāstras*.

(*Vsb*, p. 16)

The easier alternative is to sing the praises of the Lord or recite his names:

Though not entirely capable of *bhakti-yoga* (*paripūrṇa-bhakty-asambhave 'pi*), [one can] sing of his qualities (*guṇa-saṅkīrtanam*) as far as possible. . . . That singing about him is easy (*laghu*) is seen here because earlier the mention of the words *dhyāyan stuvan namasyan* is in connection with singing about the Lord, which accompanies *dhyāna* (i.e., *bhakti-yoga*) and which is very difficult.

(*Vsb*, p. 16)

Depending on one's qualifications, worship (*arcana*, in this context as an ancillary to *bhakti-yoga*) and singing in praise are, respectively, difficult and easy ways of attaining the Lord.

(*Vsb*, p. 18)

Singing the glory of the Lord's name is not restricted to those born in the higher castes:

Naraḥ: By this [word] we know that every person is qualified. . . . Worship does not entail the assistance of men and material, which sacrifices do. . . . [The Lord] can be worshiped even by men with bad qualities, as well as by those who have the great quality of having only a taste for *bhakti*. . . . It is said in the chapter [of the *Brahma-sūtras*] which discusses the qualification of *śūdras* that those not of the upper three castes cannot light the [sacred] fire and perform ceremonies that involve the use of the fire; nor can they obtain the supreme knowledge (*para-vidyā*), for that involves a study of the *Upaniṣads;* nor can they undergo the sacrament that would enable them to approach a *guru* and learn the *Vedānta*. There is no contradiction when people other than those of the three castes take refuge (*āśraya*) in the Lord, if they long for liberation. . . . The books on *dharma* also permit all, including outcastes (*caṇḍālas*), to practice non-violence, truth, purity, and service to others. . . . In the *Viṣṇu-dharma* it is said, "O Nārada, even if one who eats the flesh of a dog says *namaḥ* to me with *bhakti* and *śraddhā*, he will reach the eternal world."

(*Vsb*, pp. 19–20)

Bhaṭṭar celebrates *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, singing the names of the Lord, and he is not unaware of the radical nature of his position:

But is it not an exaggeration to say that by singing the names of the Lord a person can realize the beginning of wisdom, which is attainable only

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> by the great *dharmas* like austerities (*tapas*) and meditation (*samādhi*), which are difficult, long-drawn-out and complex? It may also make us conclude that the *śāstra* is describing a difficult and useless path, and this contradicts epistemology.
>
> This is nonsense; [these are words] said by a scholar not aware of the glory of the Lord and embroiled in rituals. Though singing in praise of the Lord is easy and simple, it carries a heavy burden [i.e., it promises sure results]. This does not nullify the *śāstra*, which prescribes the difficult path, for that has its own authority. Singing the glory of the Lord's name is marked by the extraordinary love for the Lord that accompanies it . . . in the fortunate people. Even the difficult path is fulfilled only by the favor (*prasāda*) of the Lord; why should the lighter path be [different]? Just as the Lord is pleased by the difficult path, he is happy about the purity of the person adopting the lighter way. . . . It is said [in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*], "One attains Keśava by meditation in the Kṛta-yuga, by sacrifice in the Tretā-yuga, by worship in the Dvāpara-yuga, and by singing his name in the Kali-yuga."
>
> (*Vsb*, pp. 23–24)

Even if one's devotion is not perfect, the Lord is pleased.[8] Bhaṭṭar concludes with high praise for singing the names of the Lord, calling this manifestation of *bhakti* the highest *dharma*. Bhaṭṭar paraphrases Bhīṣma:

> Thus Bhīṣma says that singing of the extraordinary qualities of the Lord is the greatest of all *dharmas* because it is easy; the object is a very dear person; it is simple, for it involves no expenditure or energy, it is attractive, and it pleases the supreme Soul. . . . In spite of being easy, it yields the highest fruit by completely removing the fear of rebirth, which has a big burden; it has no obstacles, it causes universal happiness, and it is not affected by the afflictions of space and time, and because of the glory of the object, it is never fruitless.
>
> (*Vsb*, pp. 24–25)

Though Bhaṭṭar says that singing the divine names is better than *bhakti-yoga*, he in no way questions the potency of the latter. As we saw earlier, he describes *bhakti-yoga* as a good, though difficult, path.[9] For Bhaṭṭar, *bhakti* in any form is sacred; it is addressed to the Lord, and the Lord is the sanctifier of all things, even of time.[10]

The Lord is attached to one who loves him, to one who has surrendered himself to him. The relationship between such a person of faith and the Lord is unique. After considering what surrender to the Lord entails, we shall explore the dimensions of the sacred relationship that all devotees enjoy with the Lord.

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Prapatti: Surrendering to the Lord

We can understand Bhaṭṭar's concept of *prapatti* by examining three aspects of his works. The first is his own confession of humility and unworthiness and his *frequent* seeking of refuge in the Lord and his attendants. Second, he refers to rituals forming part of the *pañca-saṁskāra* sacraments. And finally, we learn about *prapatti* through his descriptions of the special relationship between the *āśrita* and the Lord. I shall deal with the first two categories in this section and discuss the third immediately afterwards.

The *stotras* include Bhaṭṭar's confessions of unworthiness for reaching the Lord. Like Yāmuna and Kūrattāḻvāṉ, immediately after paying ritual obeisance to his *ācāryas*, Bhaṭṭar reflects on his unworthiness for singing the Lord's praises:

> If Lord Raṅga gives me his thousand mouths, at least then, like Śeṣa, . . . I can also say, "I do not have the ability to praise the Lord."
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 14)

> The Lord who resides in Śrī-raṅgam is [glorified] by the hymns of the *Vedas* in Sanskrit and Tamil (Drāviḍa). But he becomes sullied by my words; he is like an elephant, which, after a bath, likes to dirty itself in the slush.
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 16)

The second set of self-deprecatory verses appear at the end of the *stotra*—again like Kūrattāḻvāṉ's self-deprecation in the *Vaikuṇṭha-stava* and Yāmuna's in *The Jewel*.

> When you are the supreme goal whom I should reach, I desire the false objects that destroy my soul; I am proud and am but a semblance of a wise man (*jñānī*) who is never parted from you; I am a teacher (*deśika*) deceiving all!
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 90)

> O Lord of Śrī-raṅgam! I have always transgressed the laws you have ordained; through thought, word, and deed I have done wrong unto you and the *bhāgavatas*, knowingly and unknowingly.
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 91)

> O Lord of Śrī-raṅgam! My faults are as innumerable as your auspicious qualities! Just as a demon cannot quench its thirst in a sweeping flood, [I am so wicked that] I cannot participate in or [enjoy] your auspicious qualities.
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 94)

> I am afflicted with the defects that affect [a soul] from the time that it

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> is in a womb. And like a dog longing for the sacrificial offering meant for the gods,[11] I long for the Lord, who is meant only for Śrī.
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 99)

While the emotion behind these verses is apparent, Bhaṭṭar's verses do not have the sharp poignancy and the stirring distress of Kūrattāḻvāṉ's.

Bhaṭṭar's meditations on his lowliness follow his explicit statement of self-surrender. Several times in the course of the *Śrīraṅga-rāja-stava* he takes refuge in Lord Raṅganātha of Śrī-raṅgam:

> I take refuge (*āśraye*) in the radiance (*tejas*) that abides in Śrī-raṅgam, [the Lord] who is the adornment on the breast of Śrī and who glows like a gem brought out by the serpent, the eternal Śeṣa.
>
> (*ŚrS, p* 8)

Next, Bhaṭṭar takes refuge in all that is connected with the Lord—his celestial attendants, his devotees, and even his divine weapons. From verses 50 to 58 of the *ŚrS, pūrva-śaṭaka,* Bhaṭṭar takes refuge in Viśvaksena, (the commander-in-chief of Viṣṇu's attendants), Viśvaksena's wife, and Garuḍa. In verse 54 he salutes Garuḍa's wife, and in verse 55 he worships the Lord's divine weapons. Subsequently (verse 57) he takes refuge in the Lord's discus (*cakra*), and then with Hanumān (the paradigmatic servant of Rāma) and Vibhīṣaṇa (the paradigmatic *śaraṇāgata* of the Lord). In verse 58 he says that he takes refuge in the holy bar that lies across the door outside the main shrine.

The word Bhaṭṭar repeats most often in these verses of taking refuge is *āśraya*. Obviously, in none of these verses does Bhaṭṭar pledge exclusive devotion to these persons and things; rather, we get a sense of Bhaṭṭar's respectful acknowledgement of their sacredness, an acknowledgement that springs from his perception of their close association with the Lord. It is at the end of the *Śrīraṅga-rāja-stava* that we find an emotional surrender similar to Yāmuna's in *The Jewel* and Kūrattāḻvāṉ's words in his *stotras*. Bhaṭṭar says:

> The words of the *Upaniṣads* say that the Lord with Śrī creates, preserves, and subdues those with consciousness and also material things; your being the way (*upāya*) and the goal (*upeya*) is thus the very essence of your reality and not [just] an attribute. And so without any pretext (*avyājam*), O Lord reclining at Śrī-raṅgam, I come to you for refuge (*śaraṇam abhajam*).
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 87)

This verse contains several words that characterize the thirteenth century understanding of *prapatti*. The Lord is the way (*upāya*) and the goal (*upeya*); Bhaṭṭar says that he is coming to surrender without any "pretext" (*avyājam*).[12] The words he uses in surrendering himself are specific, and in later verses these are referred to as his "words of surrender." This verse seems more intense and different in tone from the earlier verses, which use the word *āśraya*.

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These words of surrender are important to Bhaṭṭar. Indeed, they seem almost sacramental in nature. Earlier, Kūrattāḻvāṉ referred to his "words of surrender" and had faith in the power of the words to attract the Lord's compassion; through that appeal to the Lord he became a *śaraṇāgata* totally dependent on the Lord. Kūrattāḻvāṉ's son now repeats these sentiments, emphasizing his own "words of surrender":

> I have no wealth of wisdom, good works, or devotion; I have no strength to claim the qualification of desire or repentance.[13] O Lord Raṅga, with my mind confused, I most foolishly say, "I take refuge in you!"
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 89)

This surrender seems to involve his teachers. Earlier, we saw Bhaṭṭar's faith in his preceptors, and now he makes a statement indicating that it is his preceptors who made his surrender possible:

> O Lord Raṅga! I have been made your burden (*bhara*) by my [*ācāryas*], who were steeped in *dharma;* I have also uttered the word *śaraṇa* with my mouth. Realizing this, you have to make me your responsibility (*bhara*) now.
>
> (*ŚrS, u* 102)

This verse is significant. It seems to strongly suggest that Bhaṭṭar was ritually submitted to the Lord by his preceptors. Further, it also says that the *prapatti* places his burden on the Lord. Elsewhere, in his *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-bhāṣya,* while commenting on the Lord's name Sannyāsa-kṛt, Bhaṭṭar talks of dissociating himself from the burden [of his sins] and transferring this burden onto the Lord.[14] The term that Bhaṭṭar uses to indicate the transfer of burden is *bhara-nyāsa*. This is significant because in the thirteenth century Vedānta Deśika, following the *Lakṣmī-tantra*, said that *bhara-nyāsa* is a synonym for *prapatti*. Today, the Vaṭakalai Śrī Vaiṣṇavas use the term *bhara-nyāsa* to refer to *prapatti*. Bhaṭṭar's father, Kūrattāḻvāṉ, spoke of transferring his burden to the Lord (*Varadarāja-stava* 91), and now Bhaṭṭar repeats the same sentiment.

Bhaṭṭar also refers several times to elements of the ritual that is now known as *pañca-saṁskāra* and is closely associated with *prapatti*.[15] Bhaṭṭar talks about the sacred *mantra* called the *dvaya* ("two"—i.e., the *mantra* in two lines)[16] and about devotees marked with the signs of two of Viṣṇu's weapons—the conch (*śaṅkha*) and discus (*cakra*)—which identify them as members of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. As we have seen in earlier literature, Periyāḻvār and Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār referred to the phrase *namo nārāyaṇāya* and the other Āḻvārs referred to the "sacred eight syllables." Like Periyāḻvār, Bhaṭṭar refers to people marked with the conch and discus; but he does so in an almost casual way, which gives us the impression that marking the body with these symbols was an accepted practice in the twelfth-century Śrī Vaiṣṇava community:

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> If [the Lord] does not mind the faults [of the devotees], what distinguishes them from people [with wrong qualities]? [The answer is:] He has made [friendship] the distinguishing characteristic; [as the scripture says,] "He who comes to me with friendship, [I treat well]; because he has tried to reach me, [I shall favor him]." In *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa* [it is said,] "Those who are marked with the discus (*cakra*) and the conch (*śaṅkha*) can come to me. Those who are not thus marked cannot approach me." In the *Viṣṇu-dharma* [it is said,] "Those who refrain from harming [the devotees] who wear the symbol of having taken refuge in me are those who do not disobey my commands." In the *Viṣṇu-tattva* [it is said], "The wearing of the discus, etc., shows the connection [of a person] to the Supreme, just as a bracelet and other [ornaments] indicate the chastity of a woman. This is the characteristic of a Vaiṣṇava; otherwise, people are characterized as low."
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 135, on the name Kṛta-lakṣaṇa)

Bhaṭṭar's quoting from the texts is significant: it indicates the orthopraxy of the ritual of marking one's shoulders or upper arms with the conch and discus and also indicates his acceptance of textual authority to support the ritual. This ritual is known today as *samāśrayaṇam* or *tāpa*.

Bhaṭṭar is the first *ācārya* to discuss, in one place, the three "secrets" (*rahasyas*) given to a person during the sacrament of *pañca-saṁskāra*. These *rahasyas* are the "sacred eight syllables" (known as the *aṣṭākṣara*, the *tiruveṭṭu eḷuttu*, the *mūla-mantra*, or the *tirumantra*), the *dvaya*, and the *carama-śloka* ("last verse," i.e., *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66).[17] In his *Aṣṭa-ślokī* ("Eight Verses"), Bhaṭṭar discusses the *mantras* and sees them as containing all the basic tenets of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.[18]

Bhaṭṭar also mentions the three *rahasyas* in his commentary on the twenty-first verse of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*. In his introduction he summarizes the entire work:

> By the first ten [verses of the *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*], the meaning of the *tirumantra* is made clear; by the second ten [verses], the meaning of the *carama-śloka;* by the first ten verses, *bhakti* is described, by the second ten, *prapatti*, and by the third ten, the [importance of] mediation (*puruṣakāra*) is proclaimed.[19]

Apart from his discussions in the *Aṣṭa-ślokī* and his commentary on the Āḻvār verse, Bhaṭṭar also refers to the *dvaya* in his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma:*

> He is always associated with Lakṣmī. . . . [He has said,] "While embracing the Goddess, I sportingly gave the *dvaya-mantra*." . . . This *mantra* says that [the Lord] conquers all sorrows.
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 115, on Lakṣmīvān and Samitiñjaya)

I have included these references to the marks of discus and conch and to the

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mantras to establish that even in the early, formative years of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism they were accepted as a part of the religious life of the community. References to them keep increasing every generation.

In the course of his writings, Bhaṭṭar describes *bhakti-yoga* and the simpler alternative of singing the Lord's name (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*), which is an outpouring of ardent *bhakti*. In his hymns we see the continuity of the *stotra* tradition: the confessions of unworthiness and the seeking of refuge in Nārāyaṇa. But it is in Bhaṭṭar's description of the relationship between the devotee and the Lord that we see the assured confidence and inspiring faith he has in the absolute protection Nārāyaṇa can afford to one who has sought his protection.

The Special Relationship of Lord and Devotee

Bhaṭṭar frequently talks about the relationships between all human beings and the Lord, but the very special relationship between Viṣṇu and his devotee is extolled. Nārāyaṇa is the protector of all:

> The name Loka-bandhu indicates the relationship between [the Lord and human beings]; he showers grace (*anugraha*) on all his subjects. All people of the world belong to him. He is related to all beings. . . . "[Nārāyaṇa] is the mother, the father, the brother, the residing place, the refuge, the friend, and the final goal. . . . He is the father of the worlds."
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 176)

Bhaṭṭar also describes Nārāyaṇa in a metaphor that is understandable for one who has experienced the intense heat of South India:

> Just as the *pārijāta* tree protects birds and travelers with its shady branches, [the Lord] protects all beings [of the universe]. Here the [divine] names Bhūr, Bhuvas, and Suvar are mere examples. . . . If one seeks shelter under the tree of Brahman, one can expect the ripe fruit [of liberation] to fall.
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 206, on Bhūr-bhuvas-suvar)

When the Lord is so easily accessible, why are all beings not automatically protected? Piḷḷāṉ asked a similar question earlier: Why does everyone not become fascinated with the Lord's qualities and take refuge in him? Bhaṭṭar's answer is implied in several instances. The tree offers shelter to one who seeks it. While the tree and its shade are available to all travelers, protection is given to those who want it. The Lord is easily accessible; as Bhaṭṭar says, "Though he is priceless, it is possible to obtain him by some semblance of payment."[20]

The Lord loves the devotee who approaches him. This special relationship is exquisitely delineated in Bhaṭṭar's meditations on the story of Nārāyaṇa and the

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elephant Gajendra. This story is from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa,*[21] and we saw that the Āḻvārs referred to it frequently. While Gajendra, the elephant-king and a devotee of Nārāyaṇa, was plucking a lotus from a pond for his worship, a crocodile caught his legs between its jaws. The elephant struggled to free itself and failed. Finally, he ceased all struggle and called on the Lord for help, seeking his protection. The Lord rushed to his aid and slew the crocodile.

Bhaṭṭar is entranced with this myth. Earlier we noted how his father, Kūrattāḻvāṉ, was fascinated with the image of the child Kṛṣṇa tied by a string to a mortar, and how he depicted him as being dependent on the love of his devotees. Bhaṭṭar focuses on the story of Gajendra and sees it as a paradigmatic instance of the Lord's love for his devotee.

The term *devotee* is used in a most fluid sense here. Bhaṭṭar refers to Gajendra as a *bhakta,* a *śaraṇāgata,* and an *āśrita.*[22] Bhaṭṭar often uses series of names in the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-bhāṣya* to discuss special features of certain *avatāras.*[23] He uses thirty-three names to talk about Gajendra,[24] and also sings about this myth in the *Śrīraṅga-rāja-stava (u* 56–59). In these places the focus of Bhaṭṭar's discussions is the overwhelming grace and affection the Lord has for his devotee. Gajendra is just the paradigm; through his example we can understand that the Lord is the protector of every devotee. While commenting on the name Bhayāpa, which occurs within the series of names in Bhaṭṭar's discussion of the Gajendra myth, he says, "Because of his affection (*vātsalya*), we can depend on him to remove our fear that we may be without a protector."[25] The Lord "rushed to the cry of Gajendra. . . . His garlands, ornaments and clothes were in disarray. . . . He was angry with the crocodile, . . . [but] he did only what was necessary—his haste was to reach the *āśrita.*"[26] The Lord is called Sarveśvara, says Bhaṭṭar, because "he speedily reaches those who take refuge in him (*śaraṇāgata*), not considering their competence."[27] He is never separated from the *prapanna* and so is called Acyuta.[28]

His affection for those who have surrendered themselves to him knows no bounds:

> He loves those who are devoted to him and . . . those who have come to him for refuge. For some inexplicable reason he wants to serve them and does not know what he should do; this is like the cows' wondering what they should do for their calves. . . .
>
> . . . That the Lord has the attribute of such love is seen [in the *Rāmāyaṇa*], where Sītā said, "[Rāma] knows *dharma* and is exceedingly affectionate to those who surrender themselves to him (*śaraṇāgata-vatsala*)."
>
> (*Vsb,* p. 132, on Vatsala)

For the sake of the devotee (*praṇata*), the Lord goes back on his word; he is called Cala because he will even deviate from the truth for the benefit of his devotees, as he did for the Pāṇḍavas. During the Mahābhārata war, he broke his

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promise not to bear arms and took up his discus to strike Bhīṣma.[29] He does not consider his dignity and self-respect when dealing with his devotees. At their command he serves as a messenger without any embarrassment.[30]

Prapatti can move the Lord to do anything. He even came down as the Buddha in response to the *śaraṇāgati* of Indra and other divine beings. He protects *bhaktas* as he would his own body.[31] To them he shows himself in his haste to embrace them.[32] He gives his very soul to them and increases their devotion.[33] The grace (*anugraha*) he shows to his *āśritas* can hardly be measured. Because of his love, he lives in these devotees. He does not consider their qualities or status and makes them believe he is in their hands.[34]

The Lord is attached to all who manifest devotion, but it is important to note that Bhaṭṭar distinguishes between those who love him and hope for other goals and those who are devoted to him for his own sake:

> He is attached to the wise one (*jñānī*). The Lord is attached to those who are exclusively devoted to him, but his attachment to those who seek him so as to gain new wealth or regain lost wealth, or for the realization of the soul, is the result of his generosity (*audārya*).
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 195, on Priyārha)

By fulfilling all their desires, he transforms them into devotees who love him for his own sake:

> By fulfilling their prayers, he makes those who pray to him for other purposes into his devotees. By making them appreciate his qualities, he increases their love for him.
>
> (*Vsb*, pp. 195–96, on Priya-kṛt and Prīti-vardhana)

He is full of "maternal" love (*vātsalya*) and affection for the *bhakta* and is therefore called Bhakta-vatsala.[35] He is at once punitive and merciful: he keeps souls who sin bound to the cycle of life and death and gives liberation to those who surrender themselves to him. He ignores the sins of his devotees and turns a blind eye to their faults:

> Though he sees the transgressions of the good people, he does not punish them but endures them with patience. Not only that: he also ignores them and is therefore called "the ignorant one" (Avijñāta). Not counting the transgressions of the *prapannas* is a [good] quality. My revered father [Kūrattāḻvāṉ] says, "Though omniscient, you do not see the faults of your *āśritas*."
>
> (*Vsb*, p. 134, on Avijñāta)

Bhaṭṭar has followed Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Piḷḷāṉ on this issue; there is no indication that the Lord "enjoys" the sins of his devotees. Rather, he ignores and forgives them.[36] It is because of his quality of *vātsalya* that he rushes to the help of the elephant Gajendra. Bhaṭṭar says:

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> "The lotus-eyed one is full of affection (*vatsala*) towards the *śaraṇāgata*."[37] Because of his affection for Gajendra, he stood close to him.
> (*Vsb*, p. 202, on Paryavasthita)

Simply hearing the story of Gajendra, it is promised, will destroy one's sins.[38] The Lord "gives prosperity to his *āśrita;* he exists for the *āśrita*." He also "fulfills the desires of the *āśrita*."[39]

Bhaṭṭar further articulates the intense love between the devotee and the Lord in his commentary on the twenty-first verse of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*. There are two passages that I would like to focus on in this context. The first suggests the importance of love in *prapatti*, while the second deals directly with the relationship between the *āśrita* and the Lord.

One of Bhaṭṭar's comments on the verse indicates that the *prapanna*'s love for the Lord has sexual overtones. The phrase in the verse is *nīraṭa pōnāḷ*. Superficially, this phrase merely means "she has gone to bathe," but in early Tamil literature it was used as a euphemism for sexual union.[40] The phrase occurs often in the *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇṭāḷ,[41] and Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai, who comments upon it in the thirteenth century, points out its sexual connotations. Significantly enough, in Bhaṭṭar's comment, he says that this phrase reveals the meaning of the word *prapadye*.[42] A little later, he continues:

> *Prapatti* is discussed in the following places: [first] when the Āḻvār asks "her" friend, "Have you thought of a way (*upāya*) for my union (*saṁśleṣa*) with the Lord?" and [secondly] in the occurrence of the phrase "She went to bathe in the lotus pond," which indicates that the way (*upāya*) that was thought of was executed.[43]

Bhaṭṭar also talks about the inseparable relationship between the Lord and the devotee:

> They both [i.e., the Lord and the soul] came. The Lord's essential nature is that of independence; [but] he also has the quality of dependence [on the devotee]. Just as it is said, "Nārāyaṇa, you are naught without me and I am nothing without you," he came, saying, "If I exist, then you exist; if I do not, then you do not."[44]

Bhaṭṭar's versatility in writing is apparent in his composition of a Sanskrit commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, his *stotras*, his Maṇipravāḷa commentary on one verse of the *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*, and his *Aṣṭa-ślokī*. The similarity of his *stotras* to those of Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Yāmuna is striking. And yet we find Bhaṭṭar's verses more temperate than those of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, whose self-derision is intense. In Bhaṭṭar's works we also miss a certain sense of wonder in celebrating the paradox inherent in the incarnations of the Lord—a wonder that was so apparent in the hymns of Kūrattāḻvāṉ. Kūrattāḻvāṉ delighted in the mighty Lord playing the role of an innocent child bound to the mortar and

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bound by his devotees' love. But Bhaṭṭar is fascinated with a different issue: he extols the gracious guardianship of Nārāyaṇa, especially in his discussion on Gajendra and, of course, throughout his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*. His hymns reveal his reverence for the city and temple of Śrī-raṅgam, which he sees as manifesting the glories of the Lord.

Bhaṭṭar is an important theologian in a generation of disciples around Rāmānuja, and he is accepted as a leader of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. His works are respected and quoted by both the Vaṭakalai and the Teṅkalai sects.[45] His disciple Nanjīyar commented on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, continuing the commentarial tradition. During Bhaṭṭar's time, the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition was firmly established and the Ubhaya-vedānta heritage fully explored. But the theological issues that divided the community later were already being discussed, although it is at least two generations after Bhaṭṭar that we begin to see signs of a family feud dividing the house built by the early *ācāryas*.

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7

The Kitchen of Rāmānuja

I began this book as an exploration of *bhakti, bhakti-yoga,* and *prapatti/śaraṇāgati* in order to further my understanding of "the way" (*upāya*) as expressed in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature written during the formative years of the community. But Śrī Vaiṣṇava *bhakti* breaks down the traditional perspectives from which "Hindu" systems of thought are conventionally perceived and understood; the lines between truth/reality (*tattva*), the way (*hita*), and the goal (*puruṣārtha*) do not have much significance. *Bhakti,* the way, becomes the goal; *prapatti* is the devotee's realization that the Lord, who is the ultimate reality (*tattva*), is also the way and the goal (*upāya/upeya; prāpaka/prāpya*) simultaneously.

Deity and Devotee

The traditional understanding of *mokṣa* as liberation from this life seems to be almost a casualty on the roadside of *bhakti-mārga:* the Āḻvārs rejoice in seeing, worshiping, and serving the Lord in a temple and singing the glory of his name in the streets. They desire to serve other devotees, implore the Lord for divine grace, long for passionate unions with the Lord and for the grace of the *ācārya,* delight in singing about the childhood pranks of Kṛṣṇa or the valor of Rāma, and only occasionally petition for freedom from this world.

The *bhakti* of the Āḻvārs is grounded in the local terrain: it is a territorial theology. The temple is extremely important in their *bhakti,* but Viṣṇu, the Lord in the temple, is also recognized as the one who is in the human heart and who, in the past, incarnated as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, et al. It is to the Lord enshrined in the temple that they frequently express their words of surrender.

Some of the Āḻvārs act out roles in the myths of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa; there are lullabies and erotic verses addressed to both of them. In several verses the poet participates in the poetic structures of Tamil Caṅkam verses. Other verses are addressed directly to the Lord or to the world at large. The myths exert a powerful influence on Āḻvār *bhakti;* the salvation afforded to Gajendra or the destruction of Laṅkā provides the context for the Āḻvār's salvation. In the Āḻvār hymns we see expressions of human passion and a quest for divine compassion.

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The Āḻvārs address the Lord as their father, beloved, and master. There is no hierarchy in these relationships; sometimes in the same verse the Āḻvār will refer to himself (or herself) as the servant and as the beloved of the Lord. The Āḻvār surrenders himself to the Lord as his lover and his servant; he seeks from him the embrace of the beloved and the protection of the king. The Āḻvārs use the word *vaiṣṇava* (a devotee of Viṣṇu, most likely referring to one who is an initiated member of a religious community); theirs is not a religion extolling isolation but one that rejoices in the company of other devotees of Viṣṇu.

While the Āḻvārs draw from both Sanskrit and Tamil literatures, it is from the time of Yāmuna that the visibility of the Ubhaya-vedānta tradition becomes pronounced. Yāmuna integrates Vedānta, *Pāñcarātra,* and the hymns of the Āḻvārs. As with the Āḻvārs, Yāmuna quotes mythic paradigms. Indeed, the Āḻvār poetic tradition lives on in the *stotras* of Yāmuna and other Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. Yāmuna defends the *āgamas,* and in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* he describes *bhakti-yoga* in terms that are echoed by Rāmānuja. When Yāmuna confesses his lack of qualification and sees surrender as the only way to reach the Lord, he follows the style and sentiment of some Āḻvār verses. And when Yāmuna accepts *bhakti-yoga* as a theoretical option but chooses to seek refuge with the Lord in his *stotras,* he sets a pattern that Rāmānuja will follow. In theory, *bhakti-yoga* and *śaraṇāgati* are alternatives, but in practice they are not alternatives for these *ācāryas* at all: When Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ surrender to the Lord, *it is precisely because they do not see bhakti-yoga as a viable option for themselves*. They regard themselves as lacking the qualifications and the *adhikāra* to practice any *upāya* other than surrender, and their perceived lack of qualification becomes, in fact, their qualification for that surrender.

Yāmuna, Kūrattāḻvāṉ, and Bhaṭṭar seek the Lord's compassion on the basis of their connection with their *ācāryas*, and Yāmuna and Bhaṭṭar also stress their biological relationships with other devotees of the Lord, as seen earlier in the poetry of the Āḻvārs. Beginning with Yāmuna, all the *ācāryas* also surrender themselves to Śrī and seek her compassion; Piḷḷāṉ calls her a mediator (*puruṣakāra*). Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Bhaṭṭar seek the Lord's compassion and believe that he *has* to save them because they have uttered "words of surrender." Since the Lord has promised to save all *śaraṇāgatas,* his credibility, they say, will be destroyed if he does not save them now.

What is remarkable about the literature of all the *ācāryas* we have studied is that while they in no way question the importance of *bhakti-yoga*—and indeed highly praise it—they say (Piḷḷāṉ paraphrases Nammāḻvār as saying) that they do not have the qualification to practice *bhakti-yoga,* which involves meditation, discipline, etc., and that they are therefore seeking refuge with the Lord. And so it seems that discussion and praise of *bhakti-yoga* remains strictly "academic" within the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. One may, of course, follow that path if one has the necessary qualifications, but it surely had to be a courageous soul

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within the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community who would boldly go where no *ācārya* had gone before, with the exception of Nāthamuni. It is important to emphasize that, according to all available evidence, no *ācārya* after Nāthamuni practiced *bhakti-yoga*.

While Piḷḷāṉ and Bhaṭṭar uphold the importance of *bhakti-yoga*, they provide better alternatives to it. Piḷḷāṉ says that a mere folding together of hands in worship is "better than *bhakti-yoga;*" Bhaṭṭar believes that the singing of the glorious names of Viṣṇu is the easy *upāya*. The early *ācāryas* do not propose *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti/śaraṇāgati* as alternative ways to get the Lord's grace. They say that *bhakti-yoga* is important, but constantly suggest easier ways and profess that they do not personally have the qualification to practice *bhakti-yoga*. The *ācāryas* of the thirteenth century talk about *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti* as alternative paths on the basis of the *stotras* of Yāmuna, Kūrattāḻvāṉ, and Bhaṭṭar, and the *Gadyas* of Rāmānuja. The *ācāryas* see devotion and loving service to the Lord as goals in themselves and describe the special relationship between the devotee and the Lord in considerable detail.

The visibility of *Pāñcarātra* structures within the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition increases with each generation of devotees. The Āḻvārs spoke of the "sacred eight syllables," [*oṁ*] *namo nārāyaṇāya* and the power of this chant, and Piḷḷāṉ and other *ācāryas* talk of its importance. Rāmānuja mentions the *dvaya*, and Bhaṭṭar also discusses it briefly in his works. The Āḻvārs and Bhaṭṭar refer to devotees who are branded with the mark of the *cakra*. The Āḻvārs celebrate the worship of the Lord in temples as an *arcā*. Later, in the *Gadyas*, Rāmānuja addresses the Lord of Śrī-raṅgam directly, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Bhaṭṭar address their *stotras* to Viṣṇu enshrined at Śrī-raṅgam, Tirumāliruñcōlai, and Kāñcipuram. While the Āḻvārs seem familiar with aspects of Pāñcarātric theology, it is Kūrattāḻvāṉ who for the first time mentions the words *para, vyūha, vibhava, antaryāmī*, and *arcā*. His son Bhaṭṭar discusses these topics in his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*. Bhaṭṭar is also the first major Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* to quote from scriptures that have limited acceptance (the *Pāñcarātra* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*); even here, however, his sparing use of the *Bhāgavata* appears only in the context of declaring the supremacy of Viṣṇu and not in arguments to prove points that may be deemed controversial.

The poetry of the Āḻvārs is quite different in texture from the works of the *ācāryas*, and it is in fact in recognition of this distinction that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community calls them differently as Āḻvārs and *ācāryas*. While certain themes of the Tamil Āḻvār poetry appear with vigor in the Sanskrit *stotras*, others are discontinued. Notable among the discontinued themes are the identification of the poet as a "heroine" of Caṅkam poetry or as a character in a mythic situation, and the *explicit* longing for an erotic union with the Lord. It should be noted that Friedhelm Hardy has a very special understanding of the word "emotional" as including action on a mythic level and as dealing with erotic passion. If one is to thus construe the word "emotion" in this very limited sense, one

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may see its disappearance from the literature of the *stotras*. But if by the word "emotion" we include other kinds of passion, we will also find a preponderance of it in the *ācārya* literature. We see as well the retention of the *aesthetic* element that Hardy regarded as very important to emotional *bhakti*.[1] Indeed, the *ācāryas* are filled with enjoyment of the Lord's beauty. This aesthetic dimension is present whenever the devotee worships the Lord and enjoys the majesty and beauty of the divine form made visible in the temple.

Where the erotic and mythic elements are retained—and this is a point that is overlooked by people outside the community —is in the Āḻvār hymns the Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotee recites in his daily worship. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava liturgy, at home and in the temple, is based on *participation of the devotee in the myth of the Āḻvār*. Just as the Āḻvār spoke as a "girl," a heroine of the Tamil poems, the Śrī Vaiṣṇava in worship speaks as the Āḻvār. In the *Tiruppāvai*, Āṇṭāḷ demands to render loving service to the Lord; the Śrī Vaiṣṇava speaks in the mythic world of Āṇṭāḷ when he recites this verse twice during the morning liturgy. The devotee *participates* in the passion and surrender of Āṇṭāḷ, Nammāḻvār, and Kulacēkara, and through *their* identification, he is the lovesick girl, the cowherd girl, Kauśalyā, and Yaśodā. The passion of Āṇṭāḷ and the surrender of Nammāḻvār are the passion and surrender of the devotee. The Āḻvārs and *ācāryas* saw their salvation in the context of the salvation of Gajendra or the rescue of Sītā; the Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotee participates in longing for the certainty of and the fulfillment of salvation as experienced by the Āḻvār.

Similarly, the devotion of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava today includes participation in the story of the *ācāryas:* through his recitation and remembrance of Rāmānuja's surrender to the Lord of Śrī-raṅgam, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ's surrender to Rāmānuja, the devotee surrenders to the Lord and the *ācārya*. The myths of the girl's longing and Yaśodā's joy, along with the Āḻvārs' vision of the Lord in the temple and the *ācāryas*' surrender, are all reenacted in the daily ritual of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava. In this connection, I would like to quote a segment from Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai's thirteenth-century commentary on Āṇṭāḷ's *Tiruppāvai:*

> In the end, they [the companions of Āṇṭāḷ] say that those who learn this work shall become the objects [of grace] for the Lord and the Mother, for all time. Those who learn will obtain the same fruit as those who *experienced* [the company of Kṛṣṇa] [i.e., the cowherd girls] and those who *imitated* it [i.e., Āṇṭāḷ and her companions]. . . . Thus Parāśara Bhaṭṭar used to say.[2]

The commentator, quoting Bhaṭṭar, already recognizes that Āṇṭāḷ has "imitated" the behavior of those who actually experienced the joys of being with Kṛṣṇa; the devotee's learning of Āṇṭāḷ's hymn is seen as an extension of Āṇṭāḷ's participation. Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai concludes his commentary a few pages later, again reflecting on the words of Bhaṭṭar:

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> The girls of Tiruvāyppāṭi got what they wanted through their enjoyment of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇānubhava*); Āṇṭāḷ got [what she wanted] through her passion (*anurāga*). And so those who learn this sacred work will get the same fruit. . . . They shall get the bliss of [sexual] union (*saṁśleṣa*) with Kṛṣṇa.
>
> Bhaṭṭar graciously said, "You should wake up in the morning and meditate (*anusandhāna*) these thirty songs [of Āṇṭāḷ]. If [you cannot do that], you may meditate on the single song [that begins] 'At the crack of dawn . . . '[3] If [you cannot do even that], *just think of the way we were*."[4]

Bhaṭṭar's advice is that even if one cannot directly participate in the emotion of Āṇṭāḷ, one may get the emotional satisfaction indirectly by thinking of the experience. One can remember and re-experience Bhaṭṭar's and other Śrī Vaiṣṇavas' enjoyment of the poems. A devotee's enjoyment of Bhaṭṭar's enjoyment of Āṇṭāḷ's enjoyment of the cowherd girl's enjoyment of Kṛṣṇa still carries the passion that is an end in itself.

Surrender to Guru and to God

> "Drink the nectar of the *sampradāya* [of Kiṭāmpi Āccāṉ[5]], who is like Udayana of the Vedānta. [This nectar] is fragrant with the aroma overflowing from the kitchen of the King of Ascetics [i.e., Rāmānuja] and can be enjoyed by an assembly of wise people."
>
> (Vedānta Deśika, *Rahasya-traya-sāra*)[6]

Vedānta Deśika was a descendent of Kitāmpi Āccāṉ, who was better known as Tirumaṭapaḷḷi Āccāṉ or "the master of the sacred kitchen." Kitāmpi Āccāṉ was Rāmānuja's cook and part of the close inner circle of the *ācārya's* disciples.

The impact of Rāmānuja on his disciples was tremendous, and the importance of *ācārya-bhakti* only escalated after his time. He was not the first *ācārya* of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, but it is his name that the tradition bears. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava philosophy was traditionally known as *emperumāṉār darśanam*, "the vision [or the philosophy] of Rāmānuja," and Rāmānuja is considered to be the savior of the community. It is said that Āndhra Pūrṇa, another disciple of Rāmānuja, chose to ignore the worship of the Lord on a special occasion because he was concerned about getting some milk ready for his Rāmānuja: "If I come out to worship *your* God," he told Rāmānuja, "then the milk I am getting ready for *my* God will scald and boil over."[7] In the thirteenth century, Vedānta Deśika recorded the following incident:

> Mutaliyāṇṭāṉ [a nephew and disciple of Rāmānuja], said, "When a lion leaps from one hill to another, the little insects on its body are transported with him. Similarly, when Bhāṣyakāra [Rāmānuja] leaped over

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the cycle of birth and death, we were saved because of our connection with him.[8]"

These incidents, recorded in the thirteenth century, emphasize the value of *connections* and the importance of Rāmānuja's salvific power. The thirteenth-century focus on the salvific power of the *ācārya* was not an innovation: the inclusion of Maturakavi Āḻvār's *Kaṇṇinuṇ Ciṛuttāmpu* ("The Short Knotted String") in the *Sacred Four Thousand* clearly indicates that the redactor of the anthology moved in an environment where *ācārya-bhakti* was important.

The various incidents of *guru-bhakti* recorded in *The Splendor* serve to focus on the salvific power of the connection between Rāmānuja and the community. We have now moved away from questions of *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti* and see a community that is increasingly asserting its confidence in the salvation that Rāmānuja has accomplished for them. But it is precisely on this issue that the community diverged: in the later tradition, the Teṅkalai community accepted Rāmānuja's surrender as reaching over the centuries and including the future generations of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, but the Vaṭakalai community, while accepting Rāmānuja's salvific ministry, believed in the importance of individual participation and a surrender to one's immediate *ācārya*. The community as a whole moved increasingly toward the notion that surrender to the *ācārya* was the only means of salvation, but in the process it disagreed on the role of human initiative, divine grace, and the importance of "good deeds" and "good deeds done accidently."[9] The river that had surged after the confluence of Tamil and Sanskrit scriptures now split again, this time over several theological issues, including the relationship of *prapatti* and divine grace. The rifts in the theological positions that began with Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai and Naṭātūr Ammāḷ deepened with the writings of Piḷḷai Lōkācārya and Vedānta Deśika.[10] The chasm grew with fights for power, for legal and monetary control over the temples celebrated by the Āḻvārs and the *ācāryas*. The one community under one God disagreed on the issue of divine grace; the story of this widening divide forms the subject of another volume.

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Appendix 1

Catalog of Myths and Names in the Āḻvār Poetry

This catalog of myths and names frequently mentioned by the Āḻvārs was prepared after reading *The Sacred Four Thousand* several times. I originally made this list to get a flavor of the Āḻvār poetry and then brought them together as a potential research tool for future work. It is hoped that these references will be of some use both to scholars who deal with Tamil material and to those who work with Vaiṣṇavite texts from other parts of India.

The Āḻvār poetry is one of the earliest examples of vernacular devotional literature, and therefore the poets' familiarity with the Sanskrit epics and *Purāṇ as* is significant. Studies such as John Hawley's *Krishna, the Butter Thief*, which primarily deal with North Indian sources, also attempt to see South Indian origins or parallels for some motifs. This catalog will hopefully be of use in studies similar in scope. The list of myths also includes some stories and motifs that are primarily Tamil in flavor or origin; these have been marked with asterisks. Other myths, like Viṣṇu's swallowing the worlds, are elaborated by the Āḻvārs and used in the context of their own mystical experience. While this catalog cannot adequately impart the quality of such references, the repetition and frequent usage of some stories (Kṛṣṇa stealing butter, the killing of Pūtanā, and so on) and some names (such as "The Dark One") indicate their significance in *bhakti* poetry. I have also included references to some deities who are not frequently mentioned by the Āḻvārs (Sarasvatī appears once, the Maruts and Vasus are mentioned once, Murukaṉ—so popular in Tamil culture—is alluded to a few times, while Gaṇeśa does not appear at all) to show their relatively minor role in these poems.

I have attempted to achieve a sense of completeness, but am only too aware that the list is by no means exhaustive. There are about twenty-five to thirty references of a general nature where Viṣṇu or one of his incarnations is described as destroying a demon and some of these references have been omitted, whereas other times when there is a consensus among the commentators about the allusion, it has been included in the relevant section. We also find indirect allusions occasionally, as when Viṣṇu is spoken of as "one of the three" and we assume the reference to Śiva and Brahmā.

It must be noted that the Āḻvārs are economical in their usage of words and that they also assume the audience to be familiar with the myths. They thus

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frequently allude to a myth by mentioning just one act or one aspect of the entire story, or by using a certain name or epithet of Viṣṇu. Occasionally, a single verse may telescope as many as ten different manifestations of Viṣṇu, but frequently there are just one or two allusions to myths in any given verse. Since the references are so brief, we only get a composite story by reading all the poems of the Āḻvārs and picking up all the references to a particular manifestation or act of Viṣṇu.

I have listed the Vāmana and Trivikrama *avatāras* separately, including all references to the "dwarf begging for land" in the former category, and the "striding over the three worlds" in the latter. Where an *avatāra* is alluded to just by name, it has been recorded in the section that deals with the general names and epithets of Viṣṇu.

Traditional editions of *The Sacred Four Thousand* sometimes carry summaries of the primary myths in appendices (for instance, see Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar's edition of the *Nālāyira Tivviyap-pirapantam*). Such editions also list the sacred places celebrated by the Āḻvārs, but to the best of my knowledge there is no compilation of references to myths. It is beyond the scope of this book to notate all these myths or summarize them all, as Śrī Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar does, but the reader may find many of them discussed in O'Flaherty's *Hindu Myths*, Danielou's *Hindu Polytheism* and Dimmitt and van Buitenen's *Classical Hindu Mythology*. The Appendix following this one, Appendix 2, contains notations on some of the myths which appear in the Āḻvār verses quoted in Chapter 1. Some of the Tamil myths are discussed in Lynn Ate's "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'" and in Chapter 1 of this book. As these references are primarily intended for research scholars who are familiar with the Sanskrit version of these myths, names have been translated into that language.

Abbreviations:

Am	*Amalaṇātipirāṉ*	*PmTmo*	*Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi*
CTmt	*Ciṛiya Tirumaṭal*	*Tcv*	*Tiruccanta-viruttam*
ITva	*Iraṇṭām Tiruvantāti*	*Tk*	*Tirukkuṛuntāṇṭakam*
Kc	*Kaṇṇinuṇ Ciṛuttāmpu*	*Tml*	*Tirumālai*
MrTva	*Mūṉṛām Tiruvantāti*	*Tne*	*Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*
MtTva	*Mutal Tiruvantāti*	*Tpa*	*Tiruppāvai*
NTmo	*Nācciyār Tirumoḻi*	*Tpl*	*Tiruppallāṇṭu*
NTva	*Nāṉmukaṉ Tiruvantāti*	*Tpy*	*Tirupaḷḷiyeḻucci*
PeTmo	*Periya Tirumoḻi*	*Tvc*	*Tiruvāciriyam*
PeTmt	*Periya Tirumaṭal*	*Tve*	*Tiruveḻukūṛṛirukkai*
PeTva	*Periya Tiruvantāti*	*Tvi*	*Tiruviruttam*
PlTmo	*Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi*	*Tvm*	*Tiruvāymoḻi*

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The Fish

PlTmo 1.5.11, 3.3.7, 4.9.9; *PeTmo* 2.7.10, 4.5.6, 5.4.8, 6.6.2, 6.8.2, 7.8.10, 8.4.4, 8.8.10, 9.1.3, 9.2.10, 11.4.1; *Tcv* 35; *NTva* 22; *PeTmt* 65; *Tvm* 1.8.8, 2.8.5, 5.1.10.

The Tortoise

PlTmo 1.5.11, 1.6.10, 2.2.9, 3.3.7, 4.9.5, 4.9.9, 5.1.9; *Tpa* 30; *NTmo* 8.7, 9.1, 10.10; *PmTmo* 8.8; *PeTmo* 1.2.5, 1.3.6, 1.4.7, 1.6.3, 2.7.10, 3.9.1, 3.10.2, 5.3.6, 5.4.8, 5.7.4, 6.1.2, 6.5.1, 6.8.2, 6.10.3, 8.4.4, 8.4.5, 8.5.7, 8.6.5, 8.6.9, 8.8.2, 8.8.10, 10.6.2, 11.4.2, 11.7.1; *Tcv* 14, 20, 21, 28, 35, 39, 81, 88, 92; *NTva* 49; *MtTva* 2, 81; *ITva* 30, 51, 68; *MrTva* 27, 33, 46, 64; *Tvi* 51, 57; *PeTva* 27; *Tk* 3, 16, 29; *CTmt* 13; *PeTmt* 57; *Tvm* 1.3.11, 1.6.6, 2.8.5, 3.8.1, 4.5.10, 4.7.5, 4.9.1, 4.10.3, 5.1.10, 5.6.5, 5.10.5, 5.10.10, 6.2.3, 7.1.3, 7.1.7, 7.2.5, 8.1.1, 8.1.5, 8.3.10, 8.4.3, 9.2.11, 9.3.6.

Mohinī

PeTmo 2.3.3, 2.5.8, 2.6.1; *Tk* 3; *Tvm* 3.7.5.

The Boar (Varāha)

PlTmo 2.10.9, 3.3.7, 3.5.5, 4.1.9, 4.3.9, 4.5.1, 4.8.8, 4.9.9, 5.1.5, 5.2.3; *NTmo* 11.8; *PmTmo* 2.3; *Tcv* 28, 37, 48, 61, 102, 114; *PeTmo* 1.1.4, 1.4.1, 2.5.6, 2.6.3, 3.1.1, 3.4.3, 4.4.8, 4.5.6, 4.6.2, 4.7.8, 4.10.10, 5.3.5, 5.4.8, 5.6.3, 6.10.1, 6.10.2, 7.2.1, 7.4.6, 7.7.4, 7.8.4, 7.8.10, 8.4.6, 8.8.3, 8.8.10, 9.1.4, 9.2.10, 9.6.3, 11.4.2, 11.7.6; *MtTva* 2, 9, 12, 25, 39, 84, 91; *ITva* 9, 30, 31, 47, 54; *NTva* 70; *Tvi* 45, 55, 99; *PeTva* 7, 16, 42; *Tvc* 6; *Tk* 4, 20; *PeTmt* 57; *Tvm* 1.7.6, 1.8.8, 1.9.2, 2.3.5, 2.8.7, 2.10.7, 3.1.10, 4.2.6, 4.5.10, 4.10.3, 5.1.10, 5.2.4, 5.6.1, 5.7.4, 5.7.6, 5.10.5, 6.6.5, 7.1.3, 7.4.3, 7.5.5, 7.6.7, 8.1.5, 8.4.3, 9.3.2, 9.9.2, 10.5.3, 10.10.7.

The Man-lion (Narasiṁha)

Tpl 5; *PlTmo* 1.2.5, 1.5.2, 1.5.7, 1.6.9, 2.7.7, 3.6.5, 4.1.1, 4.6.6, 4.8.8, 4.9.8, 4.9.9, 5.1.9; *NTmo* 6.9, 8.5; *Am* 8; *PeTmo* 1.2.4, 1.4.8, 1.5.7, 1.7.1–10, 1.8.6, 1.10.5, 2.3.8, 2.4.2, 2.4.4, 2.4.7, 2.5.7, 2.5.8, 2.5.10, 2.7.10, 2.8.1, 2.9.6, 3.1.4, 3.3.8, 3.9.1, 3.9.2, 3.10.4, 4.1.7, 4.2.7, 4.5.6, 4.10.8, 5.3.3, 5.4.8, 5.6.4, 5.7.5, 5.9.5, 6.5.2, 6.6.4, 6.6.5, 6.8.4, 7.2.2, 7.3.9, 7.4.5, 7.6.1, 7.7.5, 7.8.5, 7.8.10, 8.3.6, 8.4.4, 8.6.5, 8.8.4, 8.8.10, 8.10.8, 9.4.4, 10.1.4, 10.6.3, 10.9.8, 11.1.5, 11.4.4, 11.7.4; *Tcv* 23, 24, 25, 62; *NTva* 5, 18, 22; *MtTva* 17, 23, 25, 31, 36, 51, 90, 93; *ITva* 18, 47, 84, 94, 95; *MrTva* 31, 42, 49, 65, 95; *Tvi* 46; *PeTva* 35, 57; *Tk* 2; *CTmt* 19, 20; *PeTmt* 55, 65, 69; *Tvm* 2.2.2, 2.6.6, 2.8.9, 4.8.7, 5.1.10, 7.2.5, 7.4.6, 7.5.8, 7.6.11, 7.10.3, 8.1.3, 9.3.7, 9.4.5, 9.4.7, 9.10.6, 10.6.4, 10.6.10.

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Vāmana

PlTmo 1.3.1, 1.5.11, 1.8.7, 1.9.6, 2.9.2, 4.4.10, 4.9.7, 4.9.9, 5.2.5; *NTmo* 4.9, 11.5; *PeTmo* 1.5.6, 1.8.5, 1.10.4, 2.1.1, 2.4.2, 2.8.2, 2.9.7, 3.1.5, 3.2.4, 3.4.1, 3.10.5, 4.2.6, 4.3.4, 4.4.7, 4.5.6, 4.6.2, 4.10.7, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.4, 5.3.9, 5.4.3, 5.4.8, 6.7.3, 6.8.1, 7.8.6, 7.9.2, 8.8.5, 8.8.10, 8.10.8, 9.1.5, 9.4.1, 9.7.3, 9.8.3, 9.9.5, 10.6.4, 10.6.5, 11.3.1, 11.4.5, 11.5.9, 11.5.10, 11.7.2; *Tcv* 25, 26, 27, 37, 105; *MtTva* 20, 36, 50, 79; *ITva* 10, 18, 23, 34, 61, 89, 99; *MrTva* 52, 58, 83; *Tvi* 91; *PeTva* 20, 21, 52; *Tve* lines 6–8; *CTmt* 21; *PeTmt* 58, 59; *Tvm* 1.4.3, 1.8.6, 1.10.1, 2.3.3, 2.6.1, 3.8.2, 3.8.5, 4.3.7, 4.8.6, 4.10.10, 5.1.10, 5.9.6, 6.4.8, 6.6.9, 6.9.2, 7.5.6, 7.10.2, 8.2.9, 8.4.3, 8.10.3.

Trivikrama

PlTmo 1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.4.8, 1.5.3, 1.6.1, 1.7.9, 1.9.5, 1.9.6, 2.3.7, 2.5.9, 2.7.10, 2.10.7, 3.7.10, 3.8.9, 4.3.9, 4.7.2, 4.9.8, 5.1.4, 5.1.9, 5.3.10; *Tpa* 3, 17, 24; *NTmo* 1.7, 2.9, 5.5, 5.10, 5.11, 8.6, 11.5, 12.2, 12.9; *PmTmo* 2.3; *Tml* 35; *Am* 2; *PeTmo* 1.4.9, 1.5.6, 1.10.4, 2.5.6, 2.5.9, 2.7.2, 2.8.2, 3.1.10, 3.2.10, 3.4.1, 3.6.5, 3.6.7, 3.10.5, 4.6.1, 4.9.3, 4.10.1, 4.10.7, 5.6.4, 5.6.7, 5.8.9, 6.1.1, 6.6.5, 6.8.1, 6.10.1, 6.10.2, 7.8.6, 8.7.5, 8.10.8, 9.1.5, 9.2.3, 9.4.1, 9.8.3, 9.9.5, 9.10.5, 10.4.5, 10.10.4, 11.4.5, 11.5.10, 11.6.5; *Tcv* 28, 32, 43, 58, 66, 105; *NTva* 15, 17, 25, 35, 58; *MtTva* 3, 9, 14, 17, 18, 21, 48, 62, 76, 79, 84, 98; *ITva* 5, 9, 18, 23, 30, 34, 47, 79, 87, 91; *MrTva* 4, 7, 9, 13, 18, 20, 23, 34, 36, 40, 41, 48, 83, 90, 93; *Tvi* 35, 38, 42, 58, 61, 64, 69, 76, 79, 80, 85, 89, 91; *PeTva* 8, 27, 42, 61, 62, 76, 80; *Tvc* 1, 5, 6; *Tk* 6, 16; *Tne* 5, 14; *Tve* line 9; *CTmt* 12, 21; *PeTmt* 3, 61; *Tvm* 1.3.10, 1.8.10, 1.10.5, 2.1.10, 2.2.3, 2.8.6, 2.8.7, 3.1.10, 3.2.2, 3.2.9, 3.3.8, 3.3.11, 3.6.11, 3.8.9, 3.8.11, 4.4.8, 4.7.2, 5.3.5, 5.4.4, 5.4.10, 5.6.1, 5.9.8, 5.10.9, 6.3.11, 6.4.6, 6.4.8, 6.5.3, 6.6.1, 6.6.4, 6.9.2, 6.9.6, 6.9.9, 6.10.6, 7.2.2, 7.6.1, 8.1.5, 8.3.8, 8.6.7, 9.2.11, 9.3.2, 9.4.10, 9.5.5, 9.8.7, 9.9.2, 10.1.5, 10.9.3.

Killing Namuci

PlTmo 1.8.8.

Paraśurāma

PlTmo 3.9.2, 3.10.1, 4.9.9, 5.4.6; *PmTmo* 9.9, 10.3; *PeTmo* 2.4.6, 3.2.5, 3.4.5, 5.3.1, 5.7.6, 6.7.2, 7.2.7, 7.6.2, 8.5.8, 8.7.6, 8.8.5, 8.8.10, 9.1.6, 10.6.6, 10.9.7, 11.4.6; *Tne* 7; *Tvm* 6.2.10, 7.1.5.

Rāma

General references: *PlTmo* 3.9.6, 3.9.8, 3.9.8, 3.9.10, 4.7.1, 4.9.9; *PmTmo* 2.3, 8.3, 8.5; *PeTmo* 8.4.7, 8.5.6, 8.8.7, 8.8.10; *Tvm* 2.8.5, 3.6.8, 7.5.2, 10.1.8.

His birth: *PmTmo* 10.1.

His other brothers: *PeTmo* 2.3.7.

Kauśalyā: *PmTmo* 8.1, 8.3, 9.3, 9.10; *ITva* 79.

Tāḍakā: *PlTmo* 3.9.2; *PmTmo* 8.2, 10.2; *PeTmo* 9.8.4; *PeTmt* 78.

Rāma protects a sacrifice: *Tpy* 4; *PmTmo* 10.2; *PeTmo* 8.6.3.

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Sītā (general references): *PlTmo* 2.6.8, 3.3.5, 3.9.4, 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 3.10.3, 3.10.4, 3.10.5, 3.10.6, 3.10.6, 3.10.7, 3.10.8, 3.10.9, 3.10.10, 4.1.2, 4.3.7; *PmTmo* 2.3, 8.3, 8.5; *NTmo* 2.10; *PmTmo* 8.4, 9.8, 10.7; *PeTmo* 3.1.7, 3.10.6, 4.5.5, 5.8.1, 7.1.5, 7.8.7, 8.6.3, 9.1.10, 10.2.5–8, 10.6.8, 11.4.7, 11.5.1; *Tcv* 57, 91; *ITva* 79; *CTmt* 17, 18; *PeTmt* 31; *Tvm* 4.2.8, 4.8.5.

Rāma breaks the bow and marries Sītā: *PlTmo* 2.6.8, 3.10.1, 3.10.9, 4.1.2; *PmTmo* 8.4, 8.8, 9.4, 10.3; *PeTmo* 3.1.8, 4.1.8.

*A hunchback poisons Kaikeyī's mind: *PlTmo* 2.1.8, 4.8.4; *PmTmo* 9.10; *PeTmo* 3.1.6; *Tcv* 30.

Rāma's exile: *PlTmo* 3.9.4, 3.9.8, 3.10.3, 4.8.4; *PmTmo* 8.5, 8.6, 9.1–11, 10.4; *PeTmo* 3.1.6, 5.10.6, 7.1.5, 10.2.3, 11.5.1.

Guha: *PlTmo* 3.10.4; *PmTmo* 10.4; *PeTmo* 5.8.1.

Daśaratha: *PmTmo* 8.4, 8.9, 9.1–11; *PeTmo* 3.10.6, 4.3.5.

Rāma gives his sandals and kingdom to Bhārata: *PlTmo* 2.1.8, 3.9.6, 3.9.8, 3.10.5, 4.9.1; *PmTmo* 8.5, 10.4.

Agastya and the bow: *PmTmo* 10.4.

Citrakūṭa: *PmTmo* 10.4.

Rāma kills Virādha, Kara, Kabandha, Dūṣaṇa, and other demons: *PmTmo* 10.9; *Tcv* 104, 107; *PeTmo* 2.10.5, 3.4.6, 9.8.5.

Kākāsura: *PlTmo* 2.6.7, 3.10.6.

Śūrpaṇakhā: *PlTmo* 2.7.5, 3.9.8, 4.2.2, 4.7.1; *PmTmo* 10.5; *PeTmo* 1.5.5, 3.7.3, 3.9.4, 4.5.5, 7.4.3, 10.6.9; *PeTva* 63; *CTmt* 17, *PeTmt* 77; *Tvm* 2.3.6.

The magic deer: *PlTmo* 3.10.7; *PmTmo* 10.5; *PeTmo* 1.4.2, 1.4.8, 2.5.6, 6.7.3, 11.4.7; *Tcv* 28, 107; *MtTva* 82; *ITva* 15; *MrTva* 52; *PeTva* 82; *Tk* 16.

The abduction of Sītā and Rāma's separation from her: *NTmo* 11.7; *PmTmo* 10.6; *PeTmo* 10.2.3, 10.2.5.

Jaṭāyu: *PmTmo* 10.6.

Rāma's friendship with Sugrīva: *Tcv* 73.

Rāma kills Vāli: *PmTmo* 8.7, 10.6; *PeTmo* 10.9.8; *Tcv* 81; *NTva* 28.

Vāli (general references): *PeTmo* 1.2.1, 2.10.5, 3.4.6, 4.6.3.

Rāma shoots seven trees: *PlTmo* 2.4.2, 4.1.3; *PmTmo* 2.2; *PeTmo* 1.8.5, 3.5.5, 3.6.9, 5.5.2, 7.3.1, 8.5.5, 10.6.9, 11.2.4; *Tcv* 73, 81; *MtTva* 27; *MrTva* 52; *PeTva* 64; *Tvm* 1.5.6, 1.7.6, 2.5.7, 2.6.9, 6.10.5, 9.1.2.

Hanumān: *PlTmo* 3.5.7, 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 3.10.3, 3.10.4, 3.10.5, 3.10.6, 3.10.7, 3.10.8, 3.10.9, 3.10.10, 4.1.7; *PmTmo* 10.6, 10.11; *PeTmo* 2.2.3, 10.2.6, 10.3.2, 10.3.7; *Tk* 15.

The ring: *PlTmo* 3.10.8, 3.10.9.

Rāma's anger at the sea-king: *PlTmo* 1.6.7; *PeTmo* 3.2.6, 4.10.6; *Tcv* 31.

Rāma builds a bridge to Laṅkā: *PlTmo* 1.6.8, 2.6.8, 3.9.10, 4.1.3; *Tml* 10; *NTmo* 2.6, 2.7; *PmTmo* 8.8, 10.7; *PeTmo* 1.2.2, 1.5.1, 2.4.5, 2.9.8, 4.2.1, 4.3.6, 4.7.6, 4.10.2, 5.7.7, 5.9.6, 8.5.7, 8.6.4, 10.2.6, 10.6.7; *Tcv* 28, 39, 92, 102; *NTva* 28; *MtTva* 2; *ITva* 30; *Tne* 29; *Tvm* 8.1.5.

Kumbha and Nikumbha: *PeTmo* 10.2.5.

Kumbhakarṇa: *Tpa* 10; *PeTmo* 10.3.2; *NTva* 29.

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Rāma kills Rāvaṇa: *PlTmo* 2.6.8, 2.6.9, 2.7.5, 3.9.10, 4.2.2, 4.3.7, 4.3.8, 4.7.1, 4.7.3, 4.8.5, 4.8.10; *Tpa* 12, 24; *NTmo* 5.3; *PmTmo* 8.1, 10.7; *Tml* 10; *Tpy* 4; *Am* 4; *PeTmo* 1.5.1, 1.4.1, 1.10.1, 1.10.2, 2.2.2, 2.3.7, 2.5.9, 2.7.6, 2.10.5, 3.1.7, 3.4.7, 3.9.5, 3.10.6, 4.2.1, 4.4.6, 4.6.4, 4.8.5, 5.1.4, 5.3.7, 5.4.4, 5.4.5, 5.7.7, 5.9.6, 6.3.5, 6.8.5, 6.9.2, 6.10.4, 7.3.1, 7.4.4, 7.5.3, 7.8.7, 7.10.8, 8.4.7, 8.5.7, 8.6.1, 8.6.3, 8.6.5, 8.6.7, 9.1.7, 9.6.4, 9.8.5, 10.2.1, 10.2.2, 10.2.4, 10.2.5, 10.3.3, 10.3.9, 10.6.8, 10.9.6; *Tcv* 33, 50, 51, 56, 57, 83; *NTva* 8, 28; *MtTva* 35; *ITva* 43, 52; *MrTva* 52; *PeTva* 11, 17; *Tk* 15, 20, 29; *CTmt* 18; *PeTmt* 54; *Tvm* 1.6.7, 2.3.11, 2.7.10, 4.3.1, 7.6.9, 8.6.2, 8.6.3.

The monkeys: *Tcv* 32. The monkey army: *PeTmo* 6.10.6.

The sack of Laṅkā: *PlTmo* 1.6.8; 2.1.10; *Tml* 7; *NTmo* 2.6, 3.3, 3.4; *PmTmo* 8.8, 8.9; *PeTmo* 1.2.2, 1.4.3, 1.5.2, 1.5.4, 1.10.2, 2.2.1, 2.4.5, 3.3.6, 3.8.4, 3.9.4, 3.9.5, 4.3. 6, 4.5.2, 4.8.4, 4.8.5, 5.6.5, 5.7.7, 5.7.8, 6.2.6, 6.4.6, 6.5.3, 6.10.1, 6.10.6, 7.3.4, 7.4.4, 7.6.3, 8.5.5, 8.6.2, 8.6.4, 8.6.6, 8.7.5, 8.8.7, 9.1.10, 9.4.5, 9.5.10, 9.6.10, 9.10.6, 10.2–10, 10.3.1–10, 10.6.7, 10.6.8, 10.9.1, 11.1.6, 11.3.1, 11.4.7, 11.4.10; *Tcv* 39, 54, 116; *NTva* 8, 28, 53; *MtTva* 59; *ITva* 29; *MrTva* 51; *Tvi* 36, 77; *Tk* 2, 15, 20, 28; *Tve* line 4; *CTmt* 12; *Tvm* 2.1.3, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.4.10, 2.6.9, 2.9.10, 3.6.2, 3.8.2, 4.2.8, 4.8.5, 5.6.9, 5.7.2, 6.1.10, 6.2.1, 7.3.7, 7.4.7.

Mandodarī: *PeTmo* 5.4.5, 10.2.8.

Vibhīṣaṇa and his coronation: *PlTmo* 2.6.9, 3.9.10; *PmTmo* 10.7; *Tpy* 5; *PeTmo* 4.2.1, 4.6.4, 6.10.4, 8.6.7, 10.2.4; *Tcv* 33; *Tvm* 7.6.9.

*Rāma Faces Vibhīṣaṇa (at Śrīraṅgam): *PlTmo* 4.9.2.

Rāma hears his story from Lava and Kuśa: *PmTmo* 10.8.

Other incidents associated with Rāma

*Brahmā and Rāvaṇa: *NTva* 44; *MtTva* 45; *MrTva* 77.

*Squirrels help Rāma: *Tml* 27.

*Rāma eats with Hanumān and honors him: *PeTmo* 5.8.2; *Tcv* 21.

The redemption of Ayodhyā: *PmTmo* 10.10; *Tvm* 7.5.1.

Mālī and Sumālī: *Tcv* 28; *PeTmo* 8.6.2; *Tvm* 7.6.8, 9.2.6.

Kṛṣṇa

General references: *PlTmo* 4.9.9, 5.2.8; *PeTmo* 8.8.10.

Yaśodā (general references): *PlTmo* 1.2.1, 1.2.21, 1.4.10, 1.5.11, 1.9.10, 2.1.7, 2.3.13, 2.4.10, 2.8.10, 2.9.1, 2.9.3, 2.9.5, 2.9.7, 2.9.9, 2.10.10, 3.1.11, 3.2.10, 3.3.10, 3.8.4, 3.9.5; *Tpa* 1, 17; *NTmo* 3.9; *PmTmo* 7.5, 7.8; *PeTmo* 2.5.4, 6.8.6; *Tcv* 36; *ITva* 29; *PeTva* 38; *Tvm* 8.1.3.

Vasudeva: *PlTmo* 1.2.6, 1.2.16; *PmTmo* 7.3, 7.5; *NTmo* 4.3; *PeTmo* 4.4.1, 6.8.10, 7.5.1, 8.5.1, 10.5.1, 10.5.4, 11.5.2; *MtTva* 20.

Devakī: *PlTmo* 1.2.1, 1.2.6, 1.2.17, 1.3.4, 1.6.6, 2.1.6, 3.6.6, 3.9.3, 4.1.8, 5.3.1; *NTmo* 4.3; *PmTmo* 7.1–11; *Tvm* 6.4.5.

Balarāma: *PlTmo* 1.7.5, 4.7.5, 4.9.9; *Tpa* 17; *NTmo* 12.7, 14.1; *PeTmo* 8.5.2, 8.8.8, 8.8.10, 10.7.4; *Tvm* 10.3.10.

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Nandagopa: *PlTmo* 1.2.8, 1.6.2, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 3.1.8, 3.6.3, 3.8.5, 3.8.8, 3.9.11; *Tpa* 1, 16, 17, 18; *NTmo* 12.3, 13.6; *PmTmo* 7.3; *PeTmo* 2.2.4, 2.3.2, 3.8.1, 4.9.2, 5.10.7, 8.4.9, 10.4.1, 10.4.9, 10.5.6, 10.7.1, 10.7.2, 10.7.6, 11.5.2; *Tvm* 8.1.3.

Kṛṣṇa's birth: *Tpl* 9; *PlTmo* 1.1.10–1.10.10, 2.1.4, 5.3.1; *Tpa* 5, 25; *NTmo* 12.1; *PeTmo* 1.4.5, 8.8.9, 9.9.6; *Tvi* 61; *Tvm* 5.10.1, 7.10.4, 8.5.10, 9.1.3, 9.1.4, 9.1.5, 9.1.6, 9.1.7, 9.1.8, 9.1.9.

The purpose of his incarnation: *PlTmo* 1.2.16, 1.8.6; *PeTmo* 2.10.8, 4.4.1, 6.8.8, 8.8.9; *Tvm* 6.4.5, 6.4.8, 8.5.9, 9.1.5, 9.1.10.

Kṛṣṇa nursed by Yaśodā: *PlTmo* 1.2.3, 1.2.9, 1.4.6, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.2.6, 2.2.7, 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 2.2.10, 2.2.11, 2.4.3, 3.2.8; *PmTmo* 6.4; *PeTmo* 11.7.3; *Tcv* 37; *ITva* 9; *MrTva* 29, 74.

*Yaśodā's lullaby: *PlTmo* 1.3.1–10.

Kṛṣṇa kills Pūtanā: *PlTmo* 1.2.5, 1.3.8, 1.3.10, 1.5.4, 1.6.9, 2.3.1, 2.3.12, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.5.2, 2.5.4, 2.8.6, 2.8.7, 2.10.6, 3.1.1, 3.5.9, 4.1.6; *Tpa* 6; *NTmo* 3.9; *PmTmo* 3.4, 6.4, 7.10; *PeTmo* 1.3.1, 1.4.5, 1.5.6, 1.8.2, 2.3.3, 2.5.3, 2.5.4, 2.5.7, 2.6.7, 3.3.2, 3.8.5, 3.8.6, 3.9.6, 3.10.7, 3.10.9, 4.4.2, 4.5.2, 4.8.2, 4.10.2, 4.10.1, 5.4.6, 5.5.4, 5.7.9, 6.5.6, 6.6.7, 7.4.1, 7.8.5, 7.10.4, 7.10.8, 8.5.3, 8.6.8, 8.10.4, 9.7.5, 9.8.4, 10.4.7, 10.5.4, 10.5.5, 10.5.7, 10.5.8, 10.5.9, 10.7.8, 10.9.1, 11.1.4, 11.2.2, 11.4.9, 11.7.3; *Tcv* 36, 37, 43; *NTva* 33, 52; *MtTva* 3, 11, 13, 34, 54; *ITva* 8, 29, 93; *MrTva* 28, 29, 60, 74, 91; *Tvi* 4; *PeTva* 5, 14, 40, 52; *PeTmt* 66; *Tvm* 1.5.9, 1.9.5, 4.3.3, 4.4.6, 4.8.3, 5.3.3, 5.3.8, 5.8.11, 5.10.3, 6.4.4, 6.6.8, 7.3.5, 10.5.6.

Kṛṣṇa kills the cart demon: *PlTmo* 1.2.11, 1.5.4, 2.1.5, 2.2.4, 2.3.11, 2.3.12, 2.4.4, 2.5.2, 2.8.7, 3.1.2, 3.8.6, 3.9.9, 4.6.6, 4.9.3; *Tpa* 6, 24; *PeTmo* 2.5.5, 3.9.6, 4.2.5, 5.4.7, 5.6.4, 7.1.4, 7.8.9, 8.6.8, 8.6.9, 9.9.7, 10.5.9, 10.7.9; *Tcv* 36; *NTva* 33; *MtTva* 23, 100; *ITva* 10, 19; *MrTva* 54, 60; *Tvm* 2.1.8, 5.3.3, 5.3.8, 6.4.4, 6.6.8, 6.9.4, 7.3.5.

Kṛṣṇa kills the bird demon: *PlTmo* 2.5.4, 2.6.3, 2.7.5; *Tpa* 13; *NTmo* 1.2, 1.10, 4.7, 14.9; *PeTmo* 1.8.1, 2.10.7, 4.5.4, 5.9.5, 9.9.7, 10.5.7; *Tcv* 19, 36; *MtTva* 18, 54; *PeTva* 64; *Tvm* 5.3.8, 5.7.8, 5.7.9, 6.4.6.

Kṛṣṇa eats mud and Yaśodā sees the seven worlds: *PlTmo* 1.1.6, 1.1.7, 1.2.12, 1.2.13, 1.2.18, 2.3.6, 2.3.8; *Tcv* 37; *MrTva* 91.

*Kṛṣṇa is shown the moon: *PlTmo* 1.4.1–10, 1.6.4; *PeTmo* 10.4.4.

*Kṛṣṇa claps his hands: *PlTmo* 1.6.1–11; *PeTmo* 10.5.1–10.

Kṛṣṇa's first steps: *PlTmo* 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, 1.5.6, 1.5.7, 1.5.8, 1.5.9, 1.5.10, 1.5.11; *PmTmo* 6.4.

*Kṛṣṇa kills the tree and the calf demons: *PlTmo* 1.5.4, 2.3.10, 2.4.8, 2.5.5, 3.1.6, 3.3.7; *Tpa* 24; *PmTmo* 7.9; *PeTmo* 1.6.7, 3.8.5, 3.9.7, 3.10.8, 7.4.2, 7.10.8, 8.6.9, 9.8.6, 9.10.7; *Tcv* 37; *MtTva* 87; *ITva* 19, 23; *MrTva* 60, 68, 71; *PeTva* 54; *Tvm* 7.3.5.

Kṛṣṇa kills the horse demon (Keśī): *PlTmo* 4.9.3; *Tpa* 8; *PmTmo* 1.4; *Am* 8; *Tcv* 37, 107; *MtTva* 27; *ITva* 28, 42; *MrTva* 47, 48, 98; *Tne* 13; *PeTmo* 2.5.1, 2.10.7, 3.2.8, 3.3.1, 3.4.5, 4.5.3, 5.1.3, 7.3.5, 7.10.6, 7.10.7, 8.2.7, 9.8.8, 10.6.9, 10.10.3, 11.2.2; *PeTva* 50; *Tvm* 1.8.2, 2.1.10, 4.5.1, 6.5.9, 6.8.7.

Dantavakra: *MrTva* 21.

Kṛṣṇa kills Dhenuka: *PlTmo* 1.5.4, 2.10.4, 3.6.4; *NTmo* 14.9; *PeTmo* 3.10.7, 8.6.8, 9.8.7; *Tcv* 80, 107.

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Pralamba: *PlTmo* 3.6.4, 4.9.3; *NTmo* 12.7.

*The *kuruntu* tree: *PlTmo* 4.4.7; *PeTmo* 1.8.1, 3.8.5, 4.5.4, 9.10.8, 10.5.7, 11.2.2; *Tcv* 37; *Tvm* 6.4.6, 6.6.8; *NTva* 57; *MtTva* 27, 54, 62; *MrTva* 32.

Kṛṣṇa steals butter and yogurt, and eats them: *PlTmo* 1.2.4, 1.4.9, 1.5.5, 1.5.9, 1.6.5, 1.9.7, 2.1.5, 2.1.6, 2.2.2, 2.3.9, 2.4.2, 2.4.7, 2.5.3, 2.7.1, 2.7.5, 2.9.1, 2.9.3, 2.9.4, 2.9.5, 2.9.9, 2.10.5, 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.1.5, 3.2.6; *PmTmo* 2.4, 6.2, 7.8; *Am* 10; *PeTmo* 1.5.6, 1.10.4, 2.2.1, 2.5.4, 2.10.6, 3.3.3, 3.9.7, 3.10.9, 4.4.3, 4.10.1, 5.1.5, 5.2.3, 5.5.3, 5.9.7, 5.10.1, 6.5.4, 6.7.4, 6.9.3, 6.10.3, 7.3.5, 7.6.4, 7.7.6, 7.8.8, 8.2.5, 8.3.5, 8.7.4, 10.1.7, 10.4.5, 10.5.1, 10.5.2, 10.5.3, 10.5.7, 10.6.1–10, 10.7.1, 10.7.2, 10.7.3, 10.7.8, 10.7.10, 11.3.4, 11.4.9, 11.5.3, 11.5.4, 11.7.8; *Tcv* 37, 40; *MtTva* 18, 22, 24, 92; *MrTva* 25, 28, 91; *Tvi* 21, 54, 86, 91, 98; *CTmt* 13, 14; *PeTmt* 77; *Tvm* 1.3.1, 1.5.1, 1.5.8, 1.8.5, 2.3.8, 2.10.6, 3.8.3, 4.4.6, 4.8.11, 6.2.11, 7.7.2.

Kṛṣṇa is tied to a mortar: *PlTmo* 1.2.9, 1.2.10, 2.1.5, 2.10.5; *NTmo* 12.8; *PmTmo* 7.8; *Kc* 1; *PeTmo* 2.10.6, 6.5.4, 6.7.4, 7.7.6, 8.2.5, 8.3.4, 10.5.3, 10.6.1–10, 11.4.9, 11.5.5; *MtTva* 26, 91; *PeTva* 18; *CTmt* 15; *PeTmt* 77; *Tvm* 1.3.1, 6.4.4.

*Kṛṣṇa goes between two *maruta* trees: *PlTmo* 1.2.10, 1.5.5, 2.5.2, 2.8.7, 3.1.3, 3.9.9, 4.3.2, 4.9.3; *NTmo* 4.6, 4.7, 7.6; *PmTmo* 6.3; *PeTmo* 1.8.3, 2.5.1, 2.5.10, 2.10.7, 3.3.1, 3.3.3, 4.5.3, 4.10.1, 5.1.3, 6.5.5, 8.3.4, 8.6.8, 8.7.2, 10.4.5, 11.4.9; *Tcv* 58; *MtTva* 18, 62; *MrTva* 48, 51, 54, 60; *Tk* 16; *Tvm* 2.1.10, 3.8.10, 5.1.2, 5.3.8, 5.7.9, 6.10.5, 7.3.5.

*Kṛṣṇa dances with pots: *PlTmo* 2.7.7, 2.9.6; *NTmo* 3.5; *PmTmo* 7.9; *PeTmo* 2.5.4, 3.6.8, 3.10.8, 5.5.6, 5.10.1, 6.3.9, 6.9.4, 7.3.3, 9.8.6, 9.10.9, 10.10.4; *Tcv* 38; *MtTva* 54; *ITva* 98; *MrTva* 73; *PeTva* 13; *Tvi* 38; *Tne* 16; *PeTmt* 77; *Tvm* 2.5.11, 2.7.4, 3.6.3, 3.6.7, 4.2.5, 4.4.6, 4.5.9, 4.10.10, 8.5.6, 8.6.5, 8.6.6, 9.7.1, 10.1.11.

Kṛṣṇa grazes cows; Kṛṣṇa as cowherd: *Tpl* 4; *PlTmo* 1.1.7, 1.2.13, 1.2.20, 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, 1.5.6, 1.5.7, 1.5.10, 1.5.11, 1.6.11, 1.7.11, 1.8.3, 1.9.3, 2.1.3, 2.1.7, 2.2.1, 2.5.3, 2.6.1, 2.6.3, 2.6.4, 2.7.1, 3.1.9, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.2.6, 3.2.7, 3.2.8, 3.2.9, 3.2.10, 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.5, 3.3.6, 3.3.7, 3.3.8, 3.3.9, 3.3.10, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.4.7, 3.4.8, 3.4.9, 3.4.10, 3.6.10, 5.2.6, 5.4.11; *Tpa* 5; *NTmo* 4.8, 6.11, 12.8, 13.2, 14.9; *PmTmo* 1.4, 2.2, 3.5, 3.8; *Tml* 2; *Am* 10; *PeTmo* 1.3.4, 1.6.2, 1.8.1, 1.8.3, 1.8.4, 1.10.8, 2.1.8, 2.5.3, 2.6.8, 3.2.8, 3.3.1, 3.3.6, 3.6.4, 3.6.6, 3.7.2, 4.7.7, 4.10.2, 4.10.4, 5.5.3, 5.5.5, 5.6.10, 5.7.9, 6.6.6, 7.1.9, 7.3.2, 7.7.6, 7.9.4, 8.5.3, 8.8.1, 9.2.5, 9.5.5, 9.5.8, 9.7.1, 9.9.1, 10.1.7, 10.4.8, 10.4.9, 10.5.2, 10.5.6, 10.8.6, 10.9.2, 11.1.4, 11.2.2, 11.5.4, 11.8.10; *Tcv* 26, 34, 35, 40, 41, 59; *NTva* 71; *MtTva* 54; *ITva* 69, 98; *MrTva* 32, 42, 48, 51, 60, 75; *Tvi* 89; *PeTva* 56; *Tne* 16, 26, 29; *CTmt* 12; *Tvm* 1.5.6, 1.7.2, 1.7.3, 1.7.9, 1.8.8, 2.7.4, 3.2.9, 3.3.9, 3.5.3, 3.8.3, 3.10.4, 4.2.5, 4.4.9, 5.6.6, 6.2.10, 6.4.2, 7.2.8, 7.6.2, 7.6.4, 7.6.5, 7.6.10, 8.1.8, 8.6.9, 8.7.4, 9.9.1, 9.9.2, 9.9.5, 10.1.6, 10.3.1–11, 10.4.8, 10.9.7.

Kṛṣṇa plays the flute: *PlTmo* 1.9.8, 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 3.1.7, 3.4.4, 3.4.7, 3.4.9, 3.6.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.3, 3.6.4, 3.6.5, 3.6.6, 3.6.7, 3.6.8, 3.6.9, 3.6.10, 3.6.11, 3.9.9; *PmTmo* 6.9; *PeTmo* 6.6.7, 9.5.5, 9.5.8, 10.7.6; *MrTva* 42; *Tvm* 4.4.6, 5.10.2, 6.2.2, 6.4.2, 9.9.5, 9.9.8, 9.9.9, 9.9.10.

Kṛṣṇa vanquishes Kāliya: *Tpl* 9; *PlTmo* 1.5.6, 1.8.3, 2.1.3, 2.4.8, 2.10.3, 3.3.6, 3.5.11, 3.6.4, 3.9.5, 3.9.7, 4.3.2; *NTmo* 3.2, 4.4, 12.5; *PmTmo* 2.5, 7.9; *PeTmo* 2.9.5, 3.3.4, 3.8.5, 3.8.7, 4.2.2, 4.6.5, 4.10.3, 5.1.10, 6.7.5, 6.10.2, 10.7.12, 10.8.8; *Tcv* 38, 86; *NTva* 33; *MtTva* 54; *PeTva* 18; *CTmt* 16; *Tvm* 6.4.1.

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Kṛṣṇa steals the cowherd girls' clothes: *PlTmo* 2.1.4, 2.10.1, 2.10.2, 3.1.4; *NTmo* 3.1–10, 10.7.11.

Kṛṣṇa teases the cowherd girls and indulges in love play with them: *PlTmo* 1.2.14, 2.7.3, 2.7.4, 2.8.3, 2.8.4, 2.9.10, 3.2.2; *NTmo* 2.1–10; *PmTmo* 6.1–10; *Tcv* 36; *PeTmo* 3.8.8. Games: *PeTmo* 10.7.1–6.

The cowherd girls pine for Kṛṣṇa: *PmTmo* 6.1–10; *PlTmo* 3.4.1–10, 3.7.1–11; *Tvm* 1.7.5, 6.2.1–10, 9.9.1–11, 10.3.1–11.

*The *kuravai* dance: *PlTmo* 2.3.5, 3.4.7; *PmTmo* 7.9; *PeTmo* 1.8.4, 2.5.4, 7.8.8, 9.8.6, 10.8.9, 10.9.2, 11.2.1; *MtTva* 54; *Tvm* 3.6.3, 4.2.2, 5.10.2, 6.4.1.

Nappiṉṉai (general references): *PlTmo* 2.4.9, 2.5.1, 3.3.3; *Tpa* 18, 19, 20; *PeTmo* 2.3.5, 2.4.1, 3.2.7, 3.3.9, 3.7.7, 4.4.5, 5.2.2, 6.6.8, 6.6.9, 8.6.6, 10.4.7, 11.2.5; *Tcv* 13, 33, 41, 55, 99; *MtTva* 42; *Tvi* 3, 21; *Tne* 29; *PeTmt* 64; *Tvm* 1.9.4, 3.9.8, 5.6.11, 6.4.2, 6.5.10, 8.1.8, 8.3.1, 9.8.4, 9.8.2, 9.10.4, 10.4.3.

*The conquest of seven bulls for Nappiṉṉai: *PlTmo* 1.5.3, 1.5.7, 2.7.6, 4.1.4, 4.3.2; *NTmo* 4.7; *PmTmo* 2.5, 4.1; *PeTmo* 1.2.3, 1.4.6, 1.10.7, 2.2.4, 2.9.9, 2.10.7, 3.1.5, 3.3.5, 3.4.4, 3.8.9, 3.10.10, 4.4.4, 4.5.3, 4.5.4, 5.1.6, 5.9.8, 6.5.4, 6.5.5, 6.10.5, 7.7.7, 7.8.8, 8.3.3, 8.6.8, 8.6.9, 8.7.1, 8.7.2, 8.9.3, 10.9.2, 11.2.10, 11.7.9; *Tcv* 40, 42, 92; *NTva* 23, 33; *MtTva* 62, 83; *ITva* 62, 63; *MrTva* 25, 49, 85; *PeTva* 48; *Tve* line 31; *Tvm* 1.5.1, 1.8.7, 2.5.7, 3.5.4, 4.2.5, 4.3.1, 4.8.6, 5.6.6, 5.7.9, 6.4.6, 7.2.9.

Kṛṣṇa lifts Govardhana: *PlTmo* 1.1.8, 1.5.2, 2.3.6, 2.9.6, 2.10.4, 3.3.8, 3.4.4, 3.5.1–10, 4.2.4, 4.7.6, 4.10.9, 5.1.8; *Tpa* 24; *NTmo* 12.8, 13.8, 14.2; *PmTmo* 1.4, 7.9; *Tml* 36; *PeTmo* 1.3.4, 1.8.3, 2.3.4, 2.5.4, 2.8.4, 3.1.8, 3.2.8, 3.3.1, 3.3.6, 3.6.5, 3.8.3, 3.10.8, 4.2.3, 4.5.1, 4.7.3, 5.1.7, 5.6.1, 5.7.9, 6.7.7, 6.9.4, 6.10.5, 6.10.7, 6.10.8, 7.6.4, 7.7.5, 8.6.9, 8.7.3, 9.10.7, 10.7.7, 11.1.1, 11.2.1, 11.8.10; *Tcv* 39, 40, 106; *MtTva* 27, 39, 54, 69, 82, 86; *MrTva* 41; *Tvi* 8, 24, 74; *PeTva* 74; *Tne* 13, 29; *CTmt* 13; *PeTmt* 77; *Tvm* 1.8.4, 2.10.4, 3.3.8, 3.5.3, 4.5.7, 5.6.5, 5.6.6, 5.10.5, 6.4.1, 7.2.8, 7.4.10, 7.4.11, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.7.5, 9.4.3, 10.4.8.

Victory over the wrestlers: *Tpl* 1; *PlTmo* 1.5.6, 2.2.8, 2.7.6, 3.8.1, 4.2.6, 4.7.7, 4.9.3, 5.4.7; *Tpa* 8; *PeTmo* 2.3.1, 2.5.5, 2.10.7, 3.3.1, 4.2.4, 4.3.7, 4.6.6, 5.1.3, 5.4.7, 6.2.6, 6.3.9, 6.7.5, 7.8.9, 10.8.7, 11.2.3; *MtTva* 54; *PeTva* 41, 83; *Tne* 13; *Tvm* 6.4.3, 8.4.1.

The hunchback cured: *PlTmo* 1.8.4; *PeTmo* 10.6.2; *Tcv* 30, 49; *Tvm* 1.5.5.

Kaṁsa plots against Kṛṣṇa; Kṛṣṇa kills Kaṁsa: *PlTmo* 2.1.4, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3.1, 2.4.4, 2.6.3, 2.7.6, 2.8.6, 2.8.8, 3.2.1, 3.3.6, 4.3.2, 4.7.7, 5.1.4; *Tpa* 25; *NTmo* 3.9, 4.6, 4.7, 13.3; *PmTmo* 7.10; *PeTmo* 2.3.1, 2.6.7, 2.10.7, 3.10.3, 3.10.7, 3.10.9, 4.2.4, 4.3.7, 4.6.6, 4.8.2, 4.10.4, 5.4.7, 5.6.6, 6.7.5, 7.6.5, 7.7.7, 7.8.9, 7.10.8, 9.2.6, 10.7.10, 10.9.3, 11.2.3; *Tcv* 43; *MtTva* 39; *ITva* 89, 92; *MrTva* 34; *Tk* 1; *Tvm* 2.4.8, 3.5.5, 3.8.9, 6.4.5, 7.6.10, 8.4.1, 9.6.11, 10.3.9, 10.3.10.

Kuvalayāpīḍa: *PlTmo* 1.2.7, 1.5.3, 1.5.6, 2.7.5, 2.8.8, 4.1.3, 4.2.5, 4.3.2, 4.7.7, 4.9.3, 5.1.5, 5.1.8, 5.4.7; *Tpa* 15; *NTmo* 2.3, 4.5, 14.9; *PmTmo* 5.5; *Tml* 45; *PeTmo* 2.3.1, 2.5.1, 2.5.6, 2.8.3, 3.3.7, 3.4.5, 3.6.6, 3.10.3, 4.1.9, 4.2.4, 4.3.7, 4.5.4, 4.6.7, 4.7.4, 4.8.1, 4.8.2, 6.5.6, 6.10.3, 7.8.8, 7.8.9, 8.1.4, 8.3.2, 8.6.6, 8.6.8, 9.2.6, 9.4.8, 9.6.10, 9.9.7, 10.1.9, 11.2.2, 11.4.10; *Tcv* 38, 40, 43, 52, 58; *NTva* 33; *MtTva* 18, 27, 54; *ITva* 68, 73, 89; *MrTva* 43, 54, 65; *CTmt* 36; *Tvm* 1.9.2, 2.7.2, 4.1.4, 4.3.1, 5.3.8, 6.4.3, 8.4.1, 9.4.11, 10.5.2, 10.6.6.

Kṛṣṇa breaks the bow: *Tpl* 9; *PlTmo* 2.3.7, 4.7.7; *PeTmo* 2.3.1, 4.3.7; *PeTmo* 7.8.9; *Tne* 13.

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The Khāṇḍava forest burned: *PeTmo* 2.4.2, 2.5.2, 6.8.7.

Satyabhāmā and the *pārijāta* tree: *PlTmo* 1.9.9, 3.9.1; *PeTmo* 3.4.8, 4.6.8, 6.8.7.

Kṛṣṇa kills Narakāsura and takes 16,000 wives: *PlTmo* 4.3.3, 4.9.4; *NTmo* 7.9; *PeTmo* 3.9.8, 3.10.2, 10.9.4; *Tvi* 78.

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna return the *brāhmaṇa's* children: *PlTmo* 1.5.7, 4.8.2; *PeTmo* 5.8.8; *Tvm* 3.10.5, 6.4.9.

Sāndīpani: *PlTmo* 4.8.1; *PeTmo* 5.8.7, 6.5.7.

Pauṇḍraka: *PeTmo* 2.4.7.

Rukmiṇī and Rukma: *Tvm* 7.10.6; *PlTmo* 3.9.3, 4.1.5, 4.3.1; *NTmo* 11.9.

Kṛṣṇa drives Arjuna's chariot: *PlTmo* 1.6.6, 1.8.6, 1.9.4, 2.1.2, 2.6.5, 2.6.6, 4.1.7, 4.2.7; *PeTmo* 1.8.4, 2.3.1, 2.3.6, 3.1.8, 4.10.5, 5.1.8, 5.7.8, 6.5.8, 6.5.9, 6.7.7, 6.8.8, 7.3.4, 9.1.9, 9.6.5, 11.3.1, 11.5.8; *Tcv* 89; *NTva* 71 (the Lord's teaching); *Tne* 28; *Tvm* 3.6.10, 6.8.3, 7.5.9.

Arjuna places a garland on Viṣṇu's feet and finds it on Śiva's head: *Tvm* 2.8.6.

Kṛṣṇa befriends the Pāṇḍavas and becomes their messenger: *PlTmo* 1.8.3, 1.8.5, 2.1.2, 2.6.5, 3.9.5, 4.7.8, 4.8.3, 5.3.4; *PeTmo* 2.2.3, 2.3.5, 2.5.5, 2.10.8, 3.7.4, 4.6.7, 5.2.1, 5.3.4, 5.5.6, 5.5.7, 6.2.9, 8.6.9, 9.1.4, 9.1.8, 9.7.2, 9.9.8, 11.1.10, 11.5.7; *NTva* 24; *MrTva* 28; *PeTmt* 77; *PeTva* 19; *Tvm* 3.5.7, 3.7.11, 4.6.1, 5.6.5, 5.7.4, 5.10.1, 6.6.4, 6.8.3, 7.5.9, 7.6.10, 8.5.8, 10.6.4.

Draupadī: *PlTmo* 4.3.6, 4.9.6; *PeTmo* 2.3.6, 6.7.8.

Duryodhana and the Kauravas: *PlTmo* 1.6.6, 1.8.5, 2.1.2, 2.6.4, 2.6.5, 4.3.6, 5.3.8; *PeTmo* 2.3.6, 2.4.4, 4.4.1, 9.1.8; *Tvm* 3.5.7, 3.7.11, 5.7.4, 8.5.8.

The Kurukṣetra war: *PlTmo* 1.8.3, 1.8.6, 2.1.1, 2.6.4, 2.6.5, 4.1.7, 4.1.8, 4.2.7 (the Lord gets water for Arjuna's horses), 4.9.7; *PeTmo* 1.8.4, 2.4.3, 2.4.4, 2.10.8, 4.6.6, 4.10.5, 5.3.4, 6.7.7, 6.7.8, 6.8.8; *NTva* 16, 24; *MtTva* 8; *MrTva* 28; *Tne* 28; *Tvm* 10.6.4, 3.2.3, 3.5.7, 4.6.1, 5.7.4, 5.10.1, 6.4.10, 7.4.5, 7.6.10, 8.5.10.

Jayadratha: *PlTmo* 4.1.8; *PeTmo* 2.4.3, 5.7.8, 6.5.8, 7.5.2, 8.5.4, 8.8.9, 9.1.9, 9.6.5, 10.9.5, 11.3.1, 11.5.8; *NTva* 16; *MtTva* 8.

Kṛṣṇa kills Vāṇaṇ: *Tpl* 6; *PlTmo* 4.2.2, 4.3.4, 5.3.9; *PeTmo* 3.4.3, 4.2.5, 4.3.8, 5.1.7, 6.7.6, 7.6.3, 8.6.6; *Tcv* 53, 70, 71; *NTva* 56; *MrTva* 80, 92; *Tvi* 8; *Tne* 7, 20; *PeTmt* 37; *Tvm* 2.4.2, 3.8.9, 3.10.4, 4.8.9, 6.4.8, 7.4.8, 7.10.7.

*The dance with stilts: *PeTmo* 11.5.6.

Kṛṣṇa gives earthly pleasures to the *brāhmaṇa: PeTmo* 5.8.5.

Śiśupāla: *PlTmo* 4.3.5; *NTmo* 4.7, 11.9; *Tvm* 7.5.3.

Kṛṣṇa slays Cīmalikaṇ: *PlTmo* 2.7.8.

Parīkṣit: *PlTmo* 4.8.3, 4.9.6.

Miscellaneous

Śrī (general references): *PlTmo* 1.2.17, 1.3.7, 2.7.2, 2.7.9, 3.8.4, 4.9.1, 4.9.2, 4.9.10, 5.2.10, 5.3.2; *Tpa* 20; *NTmo* 2.7, 9.6; *PmTmo* 2.1, 2.2, 2.10, 3.5, 6.10; *PeTmo* 1.2.5, 1.6.9, 1.7.9, 1.8.8, 2.2.9, 2.8.5, 2.8.8, 2.9.10, 2.10.2, 2.10.6, 2.10.9, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.2.7, 3.3.1, 3.3.9, 3.7.9, 3.10.1, 4.3.1, 4.3.6, 4.4.5, 4.8.1, 5.1.10, 5.5.1, 5.5.5,

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5.5.6, 6.1.2, 6.2.9, 6.6.9, 6.9.1, 6.10.9, 7.4.2, 7.6.9, 7.7.1, 7.7.2, 7.8.1, 7.9.9, 7.10.6, 8.2.1, 8.5.1, 8.6.10, 8.7.4, 8.7.6, 8.7.9, 8.10.1, 8.10.4, 9.5.10, 9.7.8, 9.10.2, 9.10.4, 10.4.3, 10.4.7, 10.7.6, 10.8.9, 10.9.9, 10.10.1, 11.4.6, 11.6.10; *Tcv* 55, 72, 105, 118; *NTva* 40, 53, 59; *MtTva* 42, 67, 86; *ITva* 21, 40, 48, 57, 82; *MrTva* 1, 10, 16, 56, 96; *Tvi* 3, 52, 89; *Tvc* 2; *Tve* lines 26–27; *PeTmt* 46, 49, 62; *Tvm* 1.3.1, 1.3.8, 1.9.1, 1.9.3, 1.9.4, 1.10.4, 2.2.3, 2.8.1, 3.10.8, 4.5.8, 4.5.11, 4.9.10, 6.5.8, 6.5.10, 6.7.8, 6.9.3, 6.10.4, 8.1.1, 8.3.1, 9.2.1, 9.2.3, 9.2.10, 9.3.6, 9.4.1, 9.8.1, 9.8.5, 9.9.6, 9.10.10, 10.10.6, 10.10.7.

Śrī on Viṣṇu's chest: *Tpl* 1; *PlTmo* 1.2.10, 1.3.3, 1.3.5, 1.5.1, 1.7.4, 2.2.8; *Tml* 20, 40; *Am* 5; *NTmo* 8.4, 13.9; *PmTmo* 2.8, 8.5; *PeTmo* 2.2.9, 2.3.5, 2.4.1, 2.6.2, 2.7.1, 3.1.2, 3.2.2, 3.2.7, 3.4.9, 4.6.5, 4.7.9, 5.4.10, 6.2.2, 6.3.9, 6.9.6, 6.10.3, 7.6.7, 7.7.1, 8.3.9, 8.4.1, 8.4.6, 8.5.2, 8.6.1, 9.5.2, 10.7.9; *Tcv* 22, 24, 29, 97, 103; *NTva* 62, 92; *MtTva* 28; *ITva* 4, 52, 97; *MrTva* 2, 3, 37, 54, 57, 79, 100; *PeTva* 7; *Tne* 19; *Tve* line 35; *Tvm* 1.5.5, 1.5.9, 1.6.9, 2.5.2, 2.8.3, 3.1.6, 3.4.3, 3.7.6, 4.2.7, 4.5.2, 4.8.1, 4.8.2, 5.2.8, 5.6.11, 6.8.10, 6.10.10, 7.2.9, 7.6.6, 7.6.7, 8.3.7, 8.6.3, 8.7.6, 8.9.1, 9.4.1, 9.5.5, 9.7.6, 9.10.10, 10.6.9, 10.10.2.

The Earth-goddess: *PlTmo* 1.3.8, 4.1.9; *NTmo* 11.8; *PeTmo* 2.3.5, 2.4.3, 2.5.5, 2.6.2, 2.6.3, 2.10.2, 2.10.9, 3.2.5, 3.3.2, 3.3.9, 3.10.1, 4.3.1, 4.3.1, 5.3.5, 6.10.9, 7.6.8, 7.8.1, 8.4.9, 8.7.9, 9.1.4, 9.1.9, 9.10.2, 9.10.7, 10.4.7, 10.7.6, 10.8.9, 11.4.6; *Tcv* 22, 55; *MtTva* 42, 82; *Tvi* 3, 52; *Tne* 18; *Tve* lines 26–27; *CTmt* 1; *PeTmt* 2; *Tvm* 1.9.4, 2.8.7, 5.6.11, 6.5.10, 7.2.9, 8.1.1, 8.3.1, 9.2.10, 9.8.5, 10.5.2.

Nara-Nārāyaṇa: *NTmo* 2.1; *PeTmo* 3.8.1, 7.1.5, 7.7.4, 7.7.9, 10.6.1.

Garuḍa: *Tpl* 7; *PlTmo* 2.1.9, 2.3.8, 3.2.7, 3.5.11, 3.9.1, 4.9.5, 4.9.10, 5.1.1, 5.2.9, 5.4.2, 5.4.8; *Tml* 10, 15; *Tpa* 6; *NTmo* 5.4, 10.5, 13.7; *PmTmo* 1.8, 10.10; *PeTmo* 1.10.2, 2.3.9, 2.5.7, 2.10.4, 3.3.6, 3.8.4, 5.6.6, 5.8.4, 6.8.3, 7.7.9, 8.1.8, 8.6.2, 9.9.10, 11.1.7, 11.7.1; *Tcv* 19, 46; *NTva* 74; *ITva* 17, 21, 22, 80, 85, 92, 96; *MrTva* 7, 57; *Tvi* 3, 4, 6, 19, 22, 24, 41, 67, 87; *Tne* 6, 23; *Tve* line 10; *Tvm* 1.6.10, 1.8.1, 2.4.4, 2.6.8, 3.1.9, 3.8.1, 3.8.7, 3.8.9, 3.10.1, 3.10.2, 4.1.9, 4.5.4, 5.6.9, 5.2.3, 6.8.5, 6.10.7, 7.3.1, 7.6.8, 7.10.3, 8.1.8, 8.2.1, 8.2.4, 8.8.9, 8.10.6; 9.2.5, 9.2.6, 9.4.10, 9.9.4, 10.2.3, 10.6.5, 10.6.9.

Kalki: *PlTmo* 4.9.9; *PeTmo* 2.5.3, 8.4.7, 8.8.10; *Tvm* 5.1.10.

Hayagrīva: *PeTmo* 2.9.3, 7.8.2, 4.5.6, 5.3.2; *Tvm* 2.8.5.

Viṣṇu kills Madhu and Kaitabha: *PeTmo* 5.3.2, 10.6.3; *MrTva* 66.

The swan incarnation: *PlTmo* 1.5.11, 1.8.10; *PeTmo* 2.7.10, 4.5.6, 5.1.9, 5.3.8, 5.7.3, 7.2.1, 8.6.5, 9.2.10, 9.4.2, 11.4.8, 11.7.6; *Tcv* 19; *Tne* 30; *PeTmt* 65.

Viṣṇu saves Gajendra: *PlTmo* 2.1.9, 2.10.8, 4.2.5, 4.9.11, 4.10.1, 5.1.9; *Tml* 28; *Tpy* 2; *NTmo* 4.10, 14.10; *PeTmo* 1.8.5, 2.3.9, 2.5.1, 2.9.5, 2.10.3, 2.10.10, 3.8.2, 3.8.3, 4.4.1, 4.5.1, 4.6.1, 5.7.8, 5.8.3, 6.8.3, 7.8.3, 8.6.7, 8.9.1, 9.1.2, 11.3.2; *Tcv* 40; *NTva* 12; *MtTva* 29, 47, 78, 97; *ITva* 13, 22; *MrTva* 50, 99; *Tne* 6, 23; *Tve* lines 11–12; *CTmt* 22, 23, 36; *Tvm* 2.8.2, 2.9.1, 3.5.1, 5.1.7, 7.10.8, 8.7.2, 9.2.5.

Viṣṇu vanquishes Kālanemi: *Tcv* 31, 38, 59, 81, 106.

Other demons: *Tcv* 59.

Viṣṇu cures the moon's sickness: *PeTmo* 1.8.5, 11.8.7; *NTva* 12.

Viṣṇu gives refuge to the snake Sumukha: *PeTmo* 5.8.4; *NTva* 74; *MtTva* 80.

Kṣatrabandhu: *Tml* 4.

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Nārada: *PlTmo* 3.6.5, 4.9.5.

Viṣṇu swallows the worlds: *PlTmo* 1.2.13, 1.4.7, 1.5.1, 1.8.9, 2.6.6, 2.7.2, 2.7.9, 3.7.11, 4.1.4, 4.1.9, 4.4.2, 5.1.2; *Tpa* 26; *NTmo* 2.2, 8.6, 9.8, 12.2; *PmTmo* 8.7; *Tml* 1; *Am* 6, 9; *PeTmo* 1.4.9, 1.8.6, 1.10.3, 2.2.5, 2.4.6, 2.5.1, 2.5.5, 2.9.4, 2.10.1, 3.1.3, 3.1.10, 3.2.8, 3.9.3, 3.9.7, 3.10.3, 3.10.9, 4.1.5, 4.1.6, 4.4.9, 4.8.6, 4.10.1, 4.10.5, 5.2.7, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.5.4, 5.6.2, 5.6.6, 5.7.9, 5.9.2, 5.10.2, 5.10.3, 6.1.4, 6.1.5, 6.61, 6.9.3, 6.9.5, 7.1.2, 7.1.9, 7.2.4, 7.3.2, 7.5.4, 7.7.1, 7.8.10, 7.10.2, 8.3.7, 8.10.2, 9.2.9, 9.9.1, 9.9.3, 9.10.3, 10.1.3, 10.6.1, 10.6.2, 10.7.3, 11.4.6, 11.5.3, 11.5.4, 11.5.7, 11.6.1–10; *Tcv* 12, 22, 25, 28, 30, 31, 48, 105; *NTva* 3, 17, 22, 30, 73, 80, 87; *MtTva* 2, 10, 19, 34, 69, 92; *ITva* 18, 36, 47, 94, 98; *MrTva* 4, 8, 19, 20, 25, 33, 53, 91, 93; *Tvi* 18, 20, 56, 65, 71, 74, 79; *PeTva* 16, 42, 86; *Tvc* 2, 4, 6, 7; *Tne* 20, 24; *CTmt* 13; *PeTmt* 65; *Tvm* 1.1.7, 1.1.8, 1.1.9, 1.5.8, 1.8.7, 1.9.4, 1.10.5, 2.2.1, 2.2.6, 2.2.7, 2.2.8, 2.2.10, 2.2.11, 2.3.4, 2.5.3, 2.6.2, 2.6.7, 2.7.12, 2.8.7, 3.1.10, 3.4.9, 3.6.1, 3.6.8, 3.7.10, 3.10.9, 4.2.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.6, 4.5.10, 4.7.1, 4.8.9, 4.8.11, 4.9.8, 4.10.3, 5.4.1, 5.6.1, 5.7.7, 5.9.7, 5.10.5, 5.10.6, 6.1.2, 6.2.4, 6.2.7, 6.4.11, 6.6.3, 6.9.11, 6.10.1, 7.1.3, 7.1.4, 7.2.2, 7.3.9, 7.4.2, 7.4.4, 8.1.5, 8.3.4, 8.4.11, 8.5.5, 8.7.8, 8.7.9, 8.9.4, 8.10.4, 9.1.1, 9.3.2, 9.9.2, 9.9.11, 9.10.1, 10.2.3, 10.4.4, 10.5.3, 10.7.6, 10.7.8, 10.8.2.

Viṣṇu sleeps on the serpent in the Ocean of Milk: *Tpl* 8; *PlTmo* 1.7.2, 2.2.1, 2.6.6, 3.5.11, 3.6.7, 3.7.1, 4.3.10, 4.4.4, 4.9.7, 4.10.5, 5.1.7, 5.2.1, 5.2.10, 5.4.8, 5.4.9; *Tpa* 2, 6; *NTmo* 2.3, 3.1, 5.7, 8.9, 8.10, 10.3, 10.6, 10.9, 10.10, 11.1, 11.5; *PmTmo* 1.1, 2.8, 4.4, 6.7; *PeTmo* 1.2.6, 1.6.6, 1.6.9, 1.8.2, 1.10.5, 2.1.2, 2.5.1, 2.5.6, 2.5.7, 2.5.10, 2.9.3, 2.10.2, 3.1.1, 3.2.4, 3.5.2, 3.5.7, 3.6.7, 4.3.4, 4.10.4, 4.10.9, 4.10.10, 5.4.2, 5.6.1, 5.6.4, 5.7.6, 5.9.1, 5.9.3, 5.9.10, 6.7.3, 7.4.6, 7.7.9, 7.8.1, 8.3.2, 8.3.8, 8.3.9, 8.9.2, 8.10.7, 9.1.1, 9.4.8, 9.6.2, 9.8.2, 9.8.6, 9.8.8, 9.9.1, 10.1.8, 11.5.10, 11.8.7; *Tcv* 15, 17, 18, 19, 28, 29, 45, 47, 48, 65, 74, 78, 81, 82, 85, 93, 95, 102, 117; *NTva* 3, 10, 17, 35, 36, 50, 66, 74, 89, 94; *MtTva* 16, 21, 25, 32, 39, 42, 53, 55, 62, 63, 68, 78, 83, 85, 99; *ITva* 3, 12, 15, 28, 70, 71, 96, 97; *MrTva* 3, 5, 11, 15, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 61, 69, 80; *Tvi* 17, 33, 62, 74, 75, 79; *PeTva* 15, 34, 55, 59, 63, 77, 81, 85; *Tvc* 1, 3; *Tne* 12; *Tve* line 43; *CTmt* 22; *PeTmt* 1, 64; *Tvm* 1.4.10, 1.5.4, 1.6.6, 1.7.1, 2.1.2, 2.1.6, 2.4.7, 2.5.6, 2.5.7, 2.6.5, 2.8.1, 3.3.10, 3.5.6, 3.6.1, 3.6.5, 3.6.10, 3.7.1, 3.10.2, 4.1.6, 4.1.8, 4.3.3, 4.4.2, 4.4.5, 4.5.10, 4.8.3, 4.8.9, 4.9.1, 4.9.9, 5.2.4, 5.4.1, 5.7.1, 5.9.4, 5.10.8, 5.10.10, 5.10.11, 6.4.1, 6.6.5, 6.6.7, 6.9.4, 7.2.6, 7.2.7, 7.2.11, 7.7.6, 7.8.4, 7.10.5, 8.1.5, 8.1.8, 8.2.8, 8.3.9, 8.4.6, 8.5.4, 8.6.8, 8.7.10, 8.7.11, 8.9.8, 8.10.8, 9.3.9, 9.4.5, 10.1.4, 10.2.1, 10.2.7, 10.2.8, 10.4.5, 10.4.6, 10.5.4, 10.6.6, 10.6.10, 10.10.7.

Śiva, Kapālī, Haraṇ: *PlTmo* 1.3.2, 1.8.9, 2.8.1, 4.1.5, 4.7.2, 4.7.3, 4.10.4; *Tml* 44; *Am* 6; *PmTmo* 1.6, 4.3, 4.8; *PeTmo* 1.4.8, 1.5.8, 1.7.8, 2.1.9, 2.2.6, 2.3.1, 2.6.9, 2.8.1, 2.9.1, 2.10.8, 2.10.9, 3.4.2, 3.4.9, 3.9.3, 3.10.10, 4.2.8, 4.2.9, 5.1.7, 5.1.8, 5.7.2, 5.9.3, 5.9.4, 6.1.3, 6.7.6, 6.7.8, 6.7.9, 6.9.1, 6.9.9, 7.6.6, 7.8.10, 7.9.4, 7.10.3, 7.10.7, 9.6.1, 9.10.4, 10.1.5, 10.9.4, 11.6.3; *Tcv* 9, 42, 51, 53, 72, 108, 113; *NTva* 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, 15, 25, 31, 42, 43, 56, 58, 73, 75, 82, 87, 91, 96; *MtTva* 4, 5, 28, 46, 74, 97, 98; *ITva* 12, 17, 96; *MrTva* 31, 63, 97; *Tvi* 86; *PeTva* 71; *Tvc* 1, 4, 7; *Tk* 19; *Tne* 2; *Tve* lines 19–20; *Tvm* 1.1.8, 1.3.6, 1.3.7, 1.3.9, 1.9.5, 1.9.10, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.2.10, 2.5.2, 2.7.12, 2.8.3, 2.8.6, 3.1.7, 3.1.10, 3.4.8, 3.6.4, 3.10.4, 3.10.9, 4.8.1, 4.8.7, 4.10.4, 4.10.8, 5.2.10, 5.6.8, 5.10.4, 6.9.1, 6.9.4, 6.10.8, 7.2.10, 7.4.8, 7.5.7, 7.6.2, 7.6.4, 7.6.7, 7.7.11, 7.9.2, 7.10.7, 8.1.11, 8.3.9, 8.4.6, 8.4.9, 8.4.10, 8.8.4, 8.8.11, 9.3.10, 9.8.9, 9.9.6, 10.1.2, 10.2.6, 10.4.6, 10.7.6, 10.7.7, 10.10.1, 10.10.3, 10.10.4, 10.10.11.

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Pārvatī, Durgā: *PlTmo* 1.3.8; *NTmo* 6.3; *PeTmo* 4.2.8; *Tcv* 53, 71; *NTva* 78; *Tne* 7; *PeTmt* 40, 41; *Tvm* 7.6.7.

Dakṣa's sacrifice: *PeTmo* 5.2.6.

Mārkaṇṭēya: *PeTmo* 5.8.6; *NTva* 15; *MtTva* 94; *Tvm* 4.10.8, 5.2.7, 7.5.7.

Brahmā: *PlTmo* 1.3.1, 1.5.3, 2.5.8, 2.8.1, 4.1.5, 4.7.3, 4.9.5, 4.10.4, 4.10.5, 5.1.6, 5.3.5; *Tml* 44; *Am* 3; *NTmo* 4.3, 14.9; *PmTmo* 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 4.3, 4.8, 8.2, 8.4; *PeTmo* 1.2.8, 1.4.2, 1.4.8, 1.7.8, 2.1.9, 2.2.7, 2.4.5, 2.8.1, 2.9.1, 2.10.8, 2.10.9, 3.4.2, 3.4.9, 3.4.10, 3.10.10, 4.1.4, 4.2.9, 4.3.4, 5.4.1, 5.7.2, 5.9.3, 6.7.8, 6.8.6, 6.9.9, 6.10.9, 7.6.1, 7.6.6, 7.8.7, 7.8.10, 7.10.7, 9.10.9, 11.4.5, 11.5.2, 11.6.3; *Tcv* 5, 51, 72, 87, 108; *NTva* 1, 4, 9, 10, 19, 42, 43, 66, 73, 82, 87, 91, 96; *MtTva* 28, 33, 45, 46, 56, 59; *ITva* 12, 17, 37, 69, 78; *MrTva* 77, 97; *Tvi* 86; *PeTva* 71; *Tvc* 1, 4, 5, 7; *Tk* 20; *Tne* 2, 4; *Tve* line 2; *PeTmt* 5; *Tvm* 1.1.8, 1.3.6, 1.3.7, 1.3.9, 1.5.3, 1.9.5, 1.9.9, 1.9.10, 2.2.3, 2.2.4, 2.2.9, 2.2.10, 2.5.2, 2.7.12, 2.8.3, 3.1.7, 3.1.10, 3.4.8, 3.6.4, 3.10.9, 4.8.1, 4.8.7, 4.10.1, 4.10.4, 5.2.10, 5.6.8, 5.10.8, 6.6.4, 6.9.1, 6.9.4, 6.10.8, 7.1.11, 7.2.10, 7.5.4, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.6.4, 7.6.7, 7.7.11, 7.9.2, 8.1.11, 8.4.6, 8.4.9, 8.4.10, 8.4.11, 8.8.4, 8.8.11, 8.10.7, 9.9.10, 9.4.5, 9.8.9, 9.9.6, 10.1.2, 10.7.6, 10.7.7, 10.10.1, 10.10.3, 10.10.4, 10.10.11.

Sage Romaca: *PeTmo* 3.4.2.

Indra: *PlTmo* 1.3.3, 1.9.9, 2.8.1, 2.10.5, 3.3.8, 3.4.8, 4.3.8, 5.3.5; *Tml* 2; *Tpy* 7; *NTmo* 6.3, 7.4; *PmTmo* 1.6, 4.3, 4.8; *PeTmo* 1.4.7, 2.1.9, 2.3.4, 2.10.8, 4.1.4, 4.6.8, 5.7.2, 6.10.9, 7.6.6, 7.8.10, 7.9.4, 8.1.8, 10.7.7, 11.6.3; *Tcv* 87, 108; *NTva* 87; *ITva* 17, 52; *Tvc* 1, 7; *Tk* 20; *Tne* 4; *PeTmt* 11, 54; *Tvm* 1.9.5, 1.9.10, 2.2.9, 2.2.10, 3.1.8, 3.1.10, 4.8.7, 5.2.10, 5.6.8, 5.10.5, 6.9.4, 6.10.8, 7.6.4, 7.6.7, 7.7.11, 10.2.1, 10.10.3.

Varuṇa: *PlTmo* 1.3.6.

Agni: *Tcv* 71; *Tvm* 3.10.4.

Murukaṉ: *PeTmo* 6.7.6; *Tne* 7; *Tvm* 3.10.4, 7.4.8.

Yama: *PlTmo* 4.5.7, 4.7.4, 4.10.2, 4.10.3, 4.10.4, 4.10.5, 4.10.6, 4.10.7, 4.10.9; *Tml* 1, 12; *PeTmo* 1.6.3, 1.6.4, 1.6.6, 2.4.8, 5.8.4, 6.6.10, 8.10.6, 8.10.7, 10.2.5, 10.3.3, 10.6.5; *Tcv* 28, 116; *NTva* 68; *MtTva* 55, 67, 98; *PeTva* 23; *Tvm* 3.2.10, 5.2.1, 9.5.7, 10.2.1.

Sarasvatī: *Tvm* 7.6.7.

The Maruts and Vasus: *Tvm* 10.9.7.

The enlightened immortals: *NTva* 17; *MtTva* 4; *Tvm* 1.1.8.

Kāma: *PlTmo* 1.7.6, 5.1.10; *NTmo* 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1; *PmTmo* 3.2, 9.7; *PeTmo* 1.1.3, 3.10.7, 4.3.5, 6.7.1, 8.4.7, 8.6.5, 9.5.7, 9.5.8, 10.8.4, 10.10.7, 11.1.7, 11.2.7, 11.2.9; *NTva* 56, 78, 82; *Tvi* 6; *CTmt* 32; *PeTmt* 47; *Tvm* 2.7.8, 7.7.4, 8.10.9, 10.2.8.

*Viṣṇu showers grace on the Toṇṭai king: *PeTmo* 5.8.9.

Kuvera: *PlTmo* 1.3.5; *PeTmo* 2.10.8.

Sacred names

Namō nāraṇa, the "sacred eight letters," the *tirumantra: Tpl* 3, 10, 11; *PlTmo* 4.5.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.6; *NTmo* 5.11; *PeTmo* 1.8.9, 5.8.9, 6.6.9, 8.10.3; *Tcv* 77, 78; *MtTva* 57, 95.

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The thousand names: *Tpl* 4; *PlTmo* 2.5.9, 3.7.8, 4.2.8; *PeTmo* 1.2.7, 1.2.9, 1.3.3, 1.3.9, 1.5.4, 1.5.10, 1.8.7, 2.3.8, 2.4.7, 3.3.3, 3.5.9, 5.7.6, 6.10.1–9, 8.1.6, 8.3.9, 11.3.8, 11.3.10, 11.6.5; *MtTva* 55, 65; *ITva* 73; *PeTva* 70; *CTmt* 10, 23, 37; *Tvm* 1.3.4, 3.9.7, 5.9.10, 8.1.10, 9.3.1, 10.1.1, 10.2.2, 10.2.3.

Some Names and Epithets

Acyuta: *PlTmo* 1.2.6, 1.3.8, 2.3.13, 4.10.1; *Tml* 2; *NTmo* 6.9; *Tcv* 117; *Tvm* 3.4.4, 3.4.5, 3.4.9, 3.5.11, 3.6.8, 3.10.4, 4.4.3, 5.2.9, 7.3.11, 7.8.2, 7.8.10.

Amala, Nirmala, Vimala: *PlTmo* 5.1.4; *Tpa* 20; *NTmo* 5.2, 14.9; *Am* 1, 8; *PeTmo* 1.8.3, 3.4.4, 4.8.5, 5.1.9, 6.5.8, 7.8.3, 7.9.8; *Tcv* 9, 78, 103; *Tvm* 3.4.4, 3.4.5, 6.2.7, 9.4.7.

Ananta, Ananta-śayana: *Tcv* 65; *Tvm* 3.4.9.

Dāmodara: *PlTmo* 2.3.12, 2.5.8, 2.9.8, 3.2.9, 3.3.3, 3.5.7, 3.5.9, 3.8.3, 4.6.6, 5.4.1; *Tpa* 5; *NTmo* 7.4; *PeTmo* 8.8.10, 10.5.3; *Tvi* 49; *PeTva* 32; *Tvm* 2.7.11, 2.7.12, 10.4.1.

Govinda: *PlTmo* 1.4.1, 1.9.1, 2.2.7, 2.3.4, 2.5.6, 2.9.11, 3.3.10, 3.4.1, 3.6.2, 3.6.7, 3.6.8, 3.6.11, 3.7.3, 4.3.4, 4.4.8, 4.4.9, 4.5.8, 4.6.4, 4.6.5; *Tpa* 27, 28, 29; *NTmo* 1.3, 2.9, 6.2, 8.3, 10.7, 12.4, 12.9, 13.9; *PeTmo* 9.9.1; *PmTmo* 7.7, 9.9.1; *Tvi* 67; *Tvm* 1.5.5, 2.7.3, 2.7.4, 3.1.3, 4.4.3, 4.4.6, 7.10.3, 8.2.7, 8.6.7, 9.5.2, 10.2.6, 10.3.4, 10.6.7, 10.9.8.

Hari: *PlTmo* 4.7.8; *Tpa* 6; *PeTmo* 1.2.2, 1.8.7, 3.10.9, 7.1.8, 7.3.5; *Tvm* 1.3.6, 7.8.11, 8.2.7, 8.6.10, 9.3.3, 9.4.4, 10.10.11.

Hṛṣīkeśa: *Tpl* 4; *PlTmo* 1.7.3, 2.2.6, 2.3.10, 3.1.11, 4.4.11, 4.5.5, 5.4.5; *NTmo* 5.6, 12.6; *Tvm* 2.7.10, 2.7.11.

Īśa: *PlTmo* 3.5.5, 4.10.8; *Tml* 23; *NTmo* 14.4, 14.5; *PmTmo* 4.5; *PeTmo* 1.7.10, 2.10.1, 3.9.9, 4.2.5, 6.6.2, 7.10.3, 7.10.4, 7.10.5, 8.9.1, 9.3.4, 10.1.2; *Tcv* 4, 35, 90, 107; *NTva* 8, 86; *PeTmt* 64, 70; *Tvm* 1.2.6, 1.2.7, 1.6.1, 1.6.3, 1.6.4, 1.10.6, 2.7.1, 2.8.8, 3.3.3, 3.3.11, 3.4.1, 3.6.11, 3.9.3, 3.9.11, 3.10.10, 4.1.10, 4.3.2, 5.6.1, 7.1.6, 7.9.1, 7.10.4, 8.3.2.

Kākutstha: *PlTmo* 2.9.2, 3.9.11; *Am* 2; *PmTmo* 8.11, 9.3; *NTva* 53; *Tvm* 5.4.3, 6.6.9, 7.2.3, 8.1.2, 9.5.6.

*Kaṇṇaṇ: *PlTmo* 1.1.1, 1.9.2, 2.1.8, 2.1.9, 2.3.6, 2.3.10, 2.4.10, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 2.8.4, 2.9.1, 2.9.4, 3.3.9, 3.4.3, 3.4.10, 3.8.8, 4.2.11, 4.6.8, 5.1.6, 5.1.8; *Tml* 18, 29, 32, 45; *NTmo* 10.6, 13.1; *PmTmo* 1.4, 7.4, 7.6; *PeTmo* 4.1.10, 4.2.6, 4.3.9, 4.4.4, 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.6.8, 4.6.10, 4.8.1, 4.8.9, 4.10.2, 5.2.10, 6.9.7, 7.10.10, 8.2.4, 8.2.5, 11.3.6, 11.3.7; *Tcv* 25, 37, 47, 86, 87, 93; *NTva* 32, 50, 84, 93; *MtTva* 7, 56; *ITva* 64, 100; *MrTva* 8, 87; *Tvi* 2, 11, 12, 16, 18, 23, 25, 27, 30, 37, 47, 57, 63; *PeTva* 4, 6, 12, 36, 49, 67, 85; *PeTmt* 74; *Tvm* 1.4.11, 1.5.6, 1.8.2, 1.9.1, 1.9.4, 1.9.8, 1.9.9, 1.9.10, 1.9.11, 1.10.11, 2.2.1, 2.2.9, 2.3.7, 2.3.9, 2.4.7, 2.5.5, 2.6.2, 2.7.1, 2.7.13, 2.8.8, 2.8.9, 2.8.10, 2.9.3, 2.9.4, 3.2.8, 3.2.10, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.4.6, 3.4.8, 3.4.9, 3.5.1, 3.6.5, 3.6.10, 3.7.2, 3.7.6, 3.9.2, 3.9.11, 3.10.2, 3.10.6, 3.10.8, 3.10.10, 4.1.3, 4.1.11, 4.2.10, 4.2.11, 4.3.11, 4.4.7, 4.4.8, 4.4.9, 4.4.10, 4.4.11, 4.6.9, 5.1.1, 5.1.4, 5.1.11, 5.2.7, 5.2.10, 5.2.11, 5.3.4, 5.4.2, 5.4.5, 5.4.8, 5.7.6, 6.1.4, 6.1.9, 6.3.4, 6.3.8, 6.5.4, 6.6.7, 6.7.1, 6.7.9, 6.8.1, 6.8.6, 6.8.7, 6.8.9, 7.1.8, 7.2.3, 7.2.7, 7.3.2, 7.3.5, 7.3.9, 7.5.7, 7.5.11, 7.7.1, 7.7.4, 7.7.8, 7.8.4, 7.8.7, 7.8.8, 7.8.9, 7.10.4, 7.10.7, 8.1.2, 8.2.3, 8.2.11, 8.5.1, 8.5.6, 8.9.6, 8.9.7, 8.9.9, 8.10.11, 9.1.9, 9.1.10, 9.1.11, 9.3.4,

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Keśava: *PlTmo* 1.1.1, 1.7.10, 2.3.1, 2.9.8, 3.3.2, 3.3.8, 3.7.5, 3.7.7, 4.4.10, 4.5.1, 4.6.1; *Tpa* 7, 30; *NTmo* 1.8, 2.5, 2.6; *PmTmo* 7.2, 9.9.6; *Tcv* 20; *NTva* 59; *MtTva* 100; *PeTva* 64; *Tvm* 1.5.6, 1.9.2, 2.6.11, 2.7.1, 3.10.11, 4.9.11, 6.4.11, 7.5.3, 7.5.6, 8.2.7, 10.2.1, 10.6.2, 10.9.7.

Mādhava: *PlTmo* 2.2.11, 2.3.3, 2.5.1, 4.5.3, 4.6.4, 4.10.10, 5.1.1, 5.1.10; *Tpa* 9, 30; *NTmo* 2.5, 3.10, 5.1, 6.2, 7.9, 12.1, 14.5; *PeTmo* 1.9.9, 3.7.4, 3.7.5, 4.1.1, 5.5.8, 7.7.4, 8.4.7, 10.10.1, 10.10.4; *Tcv* 65; *NTva* 6, 65; *MtTva* 90; *ITva* 38, 39, 44; *Tvi* 67; *PeTva* 64; *Tvm* 1.5.5, 1.5.6, 1.6.10, 1.6.11, 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 4.3.3, 8.2.7, 10.2.10, 10.4.10, 10.5.6, 10.5.7, 10.9.4, 10.9.5, 10.9.8.

Madhusūdana: *PlTmo* 2.3.6, 2.9.3, 3.3.2, 3.5.2, 3.6.5, 4.5.6, 4.5.7, 4.10.10, 5.1.8, 5.1.10; *NTmo* 6.6, 7.1, 7.5; *PeTmo* 5.5.6, 6.3.9, 7.7.4, 8.4.7, 11.8.8; *NTva* 61; *Tvi* 49, 59; *Tvm* 1.5.5, 2.1.5, 2.3.1, 2.6.4, 2.7.5, 2.7.6, 6.7.11, 6.8.7, 6.8.11, 7.1.3, 7.8.1, 7.10.3, 8.6.6, 10.4.7.

*Māṇikkam, Maṇivaṇṇaṉ, Mukilvaṇṇaṉ, Kārvaṇṇaṉ, Kaṭalvaṇṇaṉ, Kāyāpūvaṇṇaṉ, Nīrvaṇṇaṉ, Koṇṭalvaṇṇaṉ, etc. (The dark one, a smoke-colored gem, a stormy cloud, dark as the deep sea, dark as a *kāyā* blossom, etc. See also Tirumāl.) *Tpl* 1; *PlTmo* 1.2.2, 1.2.9, 1.2.17, 1.3.4, 1.3.5, 1.3.10, 1.4.2, 1.5.1, 1.5.6, 1.6.3, 1.6.10, 1.7.2, 1.7.3, 1.7.4, 1.7.6, 1.7.8, 1.7.11, 1.8.1, 1.8.3, 1.8.6, 1.8.9, 2.3.1, 2.3.6, 2.4.3, 2.4.6, 2.4.9, 2.4.10, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 2.5.10, 2.6.1, 2.6.4, 2.6.7, 2.7.2, 2.7.4, 2.9.2, 2.9.4, 2.10.9, 3.1.11, 3.2.3, 3.2.10, 3.3.1, 3.3.6, 3.3.7, 3.3.10, 3.5.1, 3.5.10, 3.6.9, 3.7.2, 3.7.6, 3.7.8, 3.7.9, 3.8.10, 3.9.5, 3.9.7, 4.1.6, 4.1.10, 4.2.5, 4.2.11, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.4.2, 4.4.7, 4.4.8, 4.5.4, 4.6.7, 4.6.9, 4.7.2, 4.8.9, 4.10.10, 5.1.10, 5.2.7, 5.3.5, 5.4.11; *Tpa* 11, 16, 23, 26; *NTmo* 1.2, 1.6, 1.9, 1.10, 2.4, 2.7, 2.8, 3.5, 5.1, 5.3, 7.8, 9.5, 10.1, 12.5, 12.7, 14.5, 14.7; *PmTmo* 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.11, 2.5, 2.7, 5.8, 7.1, 7.3, 7.10, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 10.1; *Tml* 19, 20, 25, 29, 32; *Am* 9, 10; *PeTmo* 1.2.8, 1.4.6, 1.4.10, 1.5.6, 1.6.8, 1.8.2, 1.9.10, 1.10.10, 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 2.4.5, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 2.6.2, 2.8.6, 2.9.3, 3.2.6, 3.3.5, 3.3.9, 3.9.1, 4.2.8, 4.3.1, 4.3.3, 4.3.7, 4.3.9, 4.7.1, 4.8.1, 4.8.6, 4.9.8, 4.10.4, 5.2.10, 5.6.1, 5.6.9, 5.8.1, 5.9.1, 6.1.3, 6.9.3, 6.9.7, 7.1.8, 7.3.7, 7.6.2, 7.6.9, 7.7.2, 7.7.7, 7.9.8, 7.9.10, 7.10.2, 8.2.4, 8.4.4, 8.4.6, 8.4.9, 8.4.10, 8.5.10, 8.9.2, 8.9.10, 9.3.6, 9.5.1, 9.5.3, 9.5.5, 9.5.6, 9.6.3, 9.8.7, 9.8.8, 9.8.10, 9.9.3, 9.9.7, 9.9.8, 9.10.3, 9.10.5, 9.10.10, 10.1.8, 10.2.7, 10.4.2, 10.5.1, 10.5.2, 10.5.4, 10.5.8, 10.5.9, 10.9.2, 10.9.3, 10.9.7, 10.10.2, 10.10.3, 10.10.6, 10.10.7, 11.1.2, 11.1.7, 11.2.3, 11.2.7, 11.2.9, 11.3.9, 11.6.9, 11.7.2, 11.7.5, 11.7.7, 11.8.8; *Tcv* 18, 24, 38, 39, 43, 99, 103, 110, 119; *NTva* 26, 38, 46, 47, 51, 55, 77, 83, 91; *MtTva* 6, 7, 15, 19, 23, 24, 28, 34, 39, 42, 89; *ITva* 5, 11, 30, 31, 41, 51, 52, 86, 94, 95; *MrTva* 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 42, 50, 59, 79, 86; *Tvi* 2, 5, 15, 29, 39, 43, 62, 71, 78, 83, 84, 85, 94; *PeTva* 1, 6, 14, 21, 28, 46, 68, 72, 73, 86; *Tk* 4, 5, 10, 17; *Tne* 2, 3, 11, 16, 18, 30; *Tve* line 25; *CTmt* 11, 22, 25, 27, 28, 34, 53, 54, 65; *Tvm* 1.3.10, 1.4.4, 1.5.5, 1.7.3, 1.8.11, 1.9.3, 1.10.6, 2.3.1, 2.5.9, 2.6.1, 2.7.1, 2.8.10, 2.9.2, 3.2.1, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.7, 3.4.8, 3.5.1, 3.5.10, 3.6.3, 3.6.7, 3.6.9, 3.6.10, 3.7.2, 3.7.6, 3.7.8, 3.8.1, 3.8.8, 3.9.5, 3.10.2, 4.4.1, 4.4.4, 4.4.8, 4.9.3, 4.9.4, 4.9.5, 5.1.3, 5.1.5, 5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.3.6, 5.6.3, 5.6.5, 5.6.8, 5.6.10, 5.7.3, 5.7.5, 5.7.6, 5.8.7, 5.10.7, 6.1.4, 6.1.8, 6.2.10, 6.4.9, 6.5.4, 6.5.6, 6.5.7, 6.5.9, 6.6.1, 6.8.5, 6.10.3, 7.1.2, 7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.2.4, 7.2.7, 7.2.8, 7.2.11, 7.3.2, 7.3.6, 7.3.8, 7.3.9, 7.3.10, 7.3.11, 7.6.5, 7.10.4, 8.2.3, 8.3.6, 8.4.3, 8.5.2, 8.5.4, 8.5.6, 8.7.6, 8.8.1, 8.8.11, 8.9.1, 8.9.9, 8.10.2, 8.10.10, 9.1.2, 9.2.6, 9.3.1,

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Māyāvaṉ, Māyāppiraṉ, Māyaṉ: *PlTmo* 1.1.7, 1.6.2, 1.7.11, 2.5.7, 3.4.5, 3.7.2, 3.8.10, 4.1.10, 4.5.6, 4.10.8, 4.10.10, 5.2.5, 5.4.9; *Tml* 20; *Am* 7; *Kc* 1; *Tpa* 5, 9, 15, 16; *NTmo* 3.2, 5.11, 10.9, 12.2, 12.3; *PmTmo* 1.2, 1.7, 4.4; *PeTmo* 1.6.2, 1.9.9, 1.10.8, 2.6.7, 2.7.10, 3.1.3, 3.2.8, 3.5.10, 3.7.5, 3.8.1, 4.8.2, 4.8.4, 4.10.8, 5.5.4, 5.5.8, 5.9.5, 6.5.10, 6.8.6, 7.4.6, 7.8.1, 7.8.5, 7.8.8, 7.9.7, 7.10.2, 7.10.4, 7.10.6, 8.1.10, 8.6.9, 9.1.9, 9.2.9, 9.3.6, 9.7.7, 10.7.7, 11.1.10, 11.2.1; *Tcv* 2, 7, 24, 28, 41, 47, 71, 85, 91, 96, 98, 100, 104, 110, 111, 119, 120; *NTva* 6, 50, 71, 74, 76; *MtTva* 80, 94, 100; *ITva* 36, 50, 83; *MrTva* 36, 78, 83, 84, 92, 94; *Tvi* 10; *PeTva* 5, 38, 56, 60, 66; *Tvc* 4; *Tne* 19; *PeTmt* 38, 64, 66; *Tvm* 1.5.2, 1.5.4, 1.5.6, 1.5.8, 1.5.9, 1.5.11, 1.7.3, 1.7.6, 1.9.4, 1.9.5, 1.9.6, 2.3.2, 2.3.10, 2.9.1, 2.10.8, 3.3.3, 3.4.6, 3.4.8, 3.4.9, 3.4.11, 3.6.4, 3.10.4, 3.10.6, 3.10.8, 3.10.10, 4.1.5, 4.3.3, 4.3.7, 4.4.5, 4.4.7, 4.4.9, 4.6.3, 4.7.2, 4.8.2, 4.8.3, 5.2.11, 5.3.5, 5.4.6, 5.6.7, 5.7.9, 5.8.8, 5.8.10, 6.1.9, 6.2.1, 6.4.1, 6.4.6, 6.4.8, 6.6.10, 6.8.7, 6.9.2, 6.9.6, 6.9.10, 6.10.3, 7.1.1, 7.2.6, 7.3.9, 7.3.10, 7.5.5, 7.5.9, 7.5.10, 7.7.9, 7.8.1, 7.8.5, 7.8.6, 7.9.2, 8.2.4, 8.3.9, 8.4.10, 8.4.11, 8.5.1, 8.5.9, 8.6.3, 8.6.4, 8.6.8, 8.8.9, 8.9.1, 8.9.10, 8.10.5, 9.1.8, 9.5.4, 9.5.6, 9.5.11, 9.6.1, 9.6.7, 9.9.1, 9.9.2, 9.9.3, 9.9.9, 9.9.10, 10.2.2, 10.7.1.

Narasiṁha: *PlTmo* 4.4.6, 4.4.9, 5.2.4; *Tvm* 2.4.1.

Nāraṇa, Nārāyaṇa: *PlTmo* 1.1.10, 1.3.8, 2.3.2, 2.4.1, 2.4.8, 2.9.4, 3.5.8, 3.7.5, 3.7.11, 3.8.2, 4.6.1–9, 4.7.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.10; *Tpa* 1, 7, 10; *NTmo* 2.1, 5.10, 6.1, 6.8, 8.6; *PmTmo* 1.11, 2.4, 3.3, 7.11, 10.11; *PeTmo* 1.1.1–10, 2.9.1, 3.8.1, 4.7.8, 9.9.9, 10.8.4; *NTva* 1, 7, 13, 14, 31, 64, 67, 72, 96; *ITva* 1, 2, 20, 66, 81; *MrTva* 8; *PeTva* 64; *CTmt* 22; *Tvm* 1.1.10, 1.3.3, 1.3.7, 1.4.5, 1.4.9, 1.10.8, 2.1.7, 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 3.7.4, 4.1.1, 4.3.3, 4.3.6, 4.4.2, 4.4.4, 4.4.7, 4.7.1, 4.9.10, 4.10.8, 5.7.11, 5.9.10, 7.5.2, 8.2.7, 8.6.10, 9.3.1, 9.8.3, 9.8.7, 10.5.1, 10.5.2, 10.6.2, 10.6.3, 10.9.1, 10.9.2.

Padmanābha: *PlTmo* 1.6.5, 2.2.10, 2.3.11; *Tpa* 4; *Tvm* 2.7.10, 2.7.11, 7.6.1.

Paraṉ, Paramaṉ, Parameṣṭi: *Tpl* 11; *PlTmo* 1.2.7, 1.2.19, 1.5.1, 2.8.7, 3.6.6, 5.4.2; *Tml* 29; *Tpa* 2; *NTmo* 12.2; *PeTmo* 1.2.6, 1.2.8, 1.6.6, 3.1.2, 4.1.6, 4.10.4, 5.3.9, 7.7.4, 7.7.5, 7.8.2, 7.8.10, 8.4.6, 9.9.4; *PeTva* 63, 64; *Tve* line 44; *Tvm* 2.3.7, 2.3.9, 2.6.10, 3.2.6, 3.6.3, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, 3.7.6, 3.8.4, 4.2.2, 4.3.9, 4.10.3, 6.6.5, 7.9.5, 8.7.10, 8.7.11, 9.10.8, 10.4.7, 10.4.9, 10.4.11.

Pavitraṉ, Punitaṉ: *Tpl* 10, 11; *PeTmo* 1.7.5, 2.2.8, 7.7.5; *Tvm* 2.3.7, 2.3.9.

Puruṣottama: *PlTmo* 4.4.10, 4.5.1, 4.7.1–11.

Rāghava: *PmTmo* 8.1–4, 8.9–10.

Rāma: *PlTmo* 3.10.6, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.3.7, 5.4.6; *PmTmo* 8.6, 8.8, 9.1, 9.2, 9.11, 10.3, 10.6; *PeTmo* 4.10.6, 10.2.1, 10.3.1; *Tcv* 81, 93, 94; *MrTva* 52; *PeTmt* 31; *Tvm* 7.5.1.

Śrīdhara: *PlTmo* 1.4.5, 2.3.9, 4.6.2; *NTmo* 2.1, 5.9; *NTva* 62, 92; *Tvm* 1.5.6, 2.7.8, 2.7.9, 3.5.4, 4.4.2.

*Tirumāl, Māl: *Tpl* 10; *PlTmo* 1.4.7, 1.7.10, 2.2.11, 2.3.13, 3.3.4, 3.3.5, 3.5.6, 3.6.1, 3.6.10, 3.7.6, 3.7.7, 3.8.4, 4.1.5, 4.4.3, 4.6.8, 4.5.9, 4.5.10, 4.6.2, 4.6.10, 4.7.2, 4.7.5, 4.7.6, 4.7.7, 6.7.11, 6.8.5, 6.8.9, 4.9.1, 5.1.3, 5.3.5; *Tpa* 25, 26, 30; *NTmo* 5.8, 7.6, 8.1, 8.7, 9.3, 12.7, 13.5, 13.6, 14.3, 14.8; *PmTmo* 1.4, 1.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.7, 4.9, 7.11, 9.11; *Tml* 13, 18, 23, 34, 35; *PeTmo* 2.4.10, 2.9.9, 2.10.10, 3.2.4, 3.2.10, 3.4.4, 3.4.10, 3.6.10, 3.7.9, 3.7.10, 3.10.10, 4.4.1–9, 4.7.7, 4.8.10, 4.9.2, 4.10.5, 5.6.1, 5.6.7, 5.8.10, 5.9.2, 5.9.10, 6.3.2, 6.6.10, 6.8.2, 6.10.6, 6.10.10, 7.7.2,

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7.7.9, 7.10.2, 8.3.3, 8.9.2, 9.10.10, 10.1.3, 10.6.4, 10.6.6, 10.10.8, 11.1.8, 11.1.10, 11.3.2, 11.4.1, 11.4.2, 11.4.7, 11.4.10, 11.7.3, 11.7.10; *Tcv* 44, 56, 60, 68, 75, 81, 112, 113; *NTva* 5, 6, 8, 14, 27, 36, 37, 55, 65, 69, 85, 92; *MtTva* 7, 8, 19, 20, 21, 31, 38, 42, 52, 53, 58, 61, 64, 69, 75, 92, 96; *ITva* 5, 6, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 30, 32, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 54, 90, 97, 99, 100; *MrTva* 2, 4, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 30, 33, 59, 69, 86, 93, 95, 97; *Tvi* 7, 32, 34, 48, 52, 63, 87, 88, 93, 95, 97, 100; *PeTva* 2, 9, 10, 22, 30, 37, 44, 47, 53, 58, 64, 69; *Tk* 8, 12, 16, 20; *Tne* 3, 14, 27, 29; *CTmt* 5, 19; *PeTmt* 64; *Tvm* 1.4.7, 1.5.6, 1.5.11, 2.1.1, 2.2.3, 2.8.7, 3.1.1, 3.4.6, 3.4.9, 3.5.2, 3.9.6, 4.1.2, 4.2.3, 4.4.8, 5.3.5, 5.5.4, 5.6.11, 5.8.7, 6.6.1, 6.7.3, 6.7.5, 6.7.6, 6.9.11, 7.9.9, 7.9.11, 8.2.6, 8.2.7, 8.3.8, 8.3.9, 8.6.11, 8.7.9, 8.7.11, 8.8.11, 8.9.1, 9.3.11, 9.4.1, 9.8.7, 9.8.10, 9.9.11, 9.10.1, 10.4.2, 10.4.11, 10.6.9, 10.7.6, 10.7.8, 10.8.1.

Trivikrama: *PlTmo* 1.7.9, 2.3.7; *NTmo* 1.7; *PeTmo* 9.9.5; *Tvm* 2.7.6, 2.7.7, 5.7.11.

Vaikuṇṭha, Vaikuṇṭha-nātha: *PlTmo* 3.6.3; *Tpa* 9; *NTmo* 5.4; *Tvm* 1.5.4, 2.6.1, 5.2.5, 7.9.6, 7.9.7, 7.9.7, 8.2.7.

Vāmana: *NTmo* 4.2, 11.4; *PeTmo* 6.1.10, 8.3.10, 8.4.7; *Tcv* 37, 74; *PeTva* 16; *Tvm* 2.4.11, 2.7.7, 2.7.8, 3.8.5, 4.3.3, 4.3.7, 4.4.1, 4.7.2, 7.5.6, 7.8.1, 7.8.6, 8.5.1, 8.6.10, 8.7.1, 10.2.9.

Varāha: *Tvm* 6.6.5.

Vāsudeva: *PlTmo* 1.7.2, 1.7.8, 2.2.3, 2.2.5, 3.3.8, 3.6.3; *NTmo* 7.3, 7.7; *PmTmo* 6.1, 6.6; *Tvm* 5.3.6.

Viṣṇu: *PlTmo* 2.3.5; *PeTmo* 11.5.9; *Tvm* 2.7.4, 2.7.5.

Yādava: *ITva* 50.

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Appendix 2

Summaries of Myths in the Āḻvār Poetry

Abbreviations:

O'Flaherty	Wendy O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*
Dimmitt	Dimmitt and van Buitenen, *Classical Hindu Mythology*
Ate	Lynn Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'"
Narayanan	Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*
Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar	*Nālāyira Tivviyap-pirapantam,* Appendix

A. Viṣṇu eats the worlds

Viṣṇu, in the form of a baby, lay on a banyan leaf in the floods of dissolution. He swallowed the worlds, contained them in his stomach, and then spewed them out again.

Discussion: Ate, 379–85; Narayanan, chap. 11.

B. Viṣṇu strides over the worlds

Viṣṇu, disguised as a dwarf, came to a sacrifice conducted by the demon king Bali. He begged for three paces of land from Bali and was granted them. Viṣṇu then rose into the sky and with three steps strode over the universe. According to Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar's summary, Viṣṇu took his third step by placing his foot on Bali's head.

Discussion: O'Flaherty, 175–79; Dimmitt, 79–82.

C. Viṣṇu incarnates as a boar

The demon Hiraṇyākṣa abducted and hid the Earth. Viṣṇu assumed the form of a boar, rescued the goddess Earth and embraced her.

Discussion: O'Flaherty, 184–87; Dimmitt, 75–76.

D. Śiva destroys the three cities

The demons built three cities on three worlds (Tri-pura) which were impregnable to all their enemies. Brahmā promised the demon Maya that these

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cities could only be destroyed by a single arrow sent forth by Śiva. The demons then began to cause havoc. Śiva waited for the three cities to be aligned with the star Puṣyā, and then shot an arrow that set them all on fire. The Āḻvārs believe that it was Viṣṇu's grace that enabled Śiva to destroy the demons.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 189–98.

E. Śiva saves Mārkaṇṭēya through Viṣṇu's grace

A holy man had no children and prayed to Brahmā. Given the choice of having a son who would be blessed with good qualities, wisdom, health, and a handsome body, but who would only live for sixteen years, or else a son who would be evil, stupid, and ugly, but would live for one hundred years, the holy man chose the former. When this son, Mārkaṇṭēya, was a young boy, he discovered the cause of his parents' sorrow and promised that he would overcome fate and live long. He prayed to Śiva for protection; later, when the forces of Yama, (the god of death) came, they could not take Mārkaṇṭēya away. Yama himself came, but Mārkaṇṭēya sought Śiva's protection. In the Śrī Vaiṣṇava version of the story, Yama began to drag Śiva away along with Mārkaṇṭēya. Śiva then sought Viṣṇu's grace, upon which Viṣṇu gave Śiva the power to bless Mārkaṇṭēya with a long life, spanning several eons. (Summarized from Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar).

F. Viṣṇu frees Śiva from the skull on his hand

Śiva severed one of Brahmā's heads and the skull stuck to his hand. Śiva was told that he had to beg for alms to do penance; when the skull was full, he would be free of it. Through Viṣṇu's grace, the skull-bowl became filled and Śiva gained his freedom. (Summarized from Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar.)

Discussion: Dimmitt, 206–9.

G. Kṛṣṇa kills the demon-bird

Kṛṣṇa met a demon in the form of a bird called Baka (a stork, according to Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar) and split its mouth.

Discussion: Ate, 194.

H. Kṛṣṇa vanquishes Kāliya

A forest-lake was filled with poison spit out by the serpent Kāliya. The youthful Kṛṣṇa jumped into the lake, fought Kāliya, danced on his head, and banished him to the oceans.

Discussion: O'Flaherty, 221–28; Dimmitt, 114–16.

I. Kṛṣṇa kills the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

When Kṛṣṇa first went to Mathurā, he encountered a rogue elephant called Kuvalayāpīḍa, who had been sent by Kaṁsa to kill him. Kṛṣṇa broke the elephant's tusks and killed it.

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J. Viṣṇu saves Gajendra

The elephant-king Gajendra was plucking lotuses for the worship of Viṣṇu when a crocodile caught his foot in its mouth. Gajendra sought refuge with Viṣṇu and was saved by him.

K. Kṛṣṇa kills Pūtanā

Kaṁsa sent a demon-woman called Pūtanā to seek out Kṛṣṇa and kill him. Coming disguised, she gave her breast to the infant Kṛṣṇa, but he saw through her disguise and sucked out her life.

Discussion: O'Flaherty, 214–18; Dimmitt, 111–12.

L. Kṛṣṇa lifts Govardhana

Kṛṣṇa persuaded the cowherds to make their offerings to Mount Govardhana rather than to Indra. The infuriated Indra sent a horrendous storm, upon which Kṛṣṇa gave shelter to the cowherds by playfully lifting Govardhana as an umbrella. Humiliated, Indra withdrew the storm-clouds.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 116–17.

M. Viṣṇu incarnates as a man-lion (Narasiṁha)

The demon Hiraṇyakaśipu had a son called Prahlāda, a great devotee of Viṣṇu. Because Prahlāda would not worship him, Hiraṇyakaśipu plotted to kill his son. Hiraṇyakaśipu had been promised by other gods that he could not be destroyed by man or beast; therefore Viṣṇu came in the form of a man-lion, killed him, and showered his grace on Prahlāda.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 76–79.

N. Viṣṇu kills Madhu and Kaitabha

The demons Madhu and Kaitabha stole the *Vedas* from Brahmā and hid themselves under the oceans. Viṣṇu went after the demons (in some versions, as a horse-headed person) and retrieved the *Vedas*. In the form of a swan (Haṁsa), he re-taught the *Vedas* to Brahmā. (Summarized from Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar).

Discussion: Dimmitt, 232–33.

O. Kṛṣṇa kills Kaṁsa

Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa's uncle, plotted to kill him. Kṛṣṇa and his brother Balarāma were summoned by Kaṁsa from their childhood home, Gokula. They overcame several wrestlers and finally Kṛṣṇa fought Kaṁsa and slew him.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 134–37.

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P. Kṛṣṇa saves Draupadī from humiliation

Yudhiṣṭhira was challenged to a gambling match with the Kauravas and was defeated. He had staked the freedom of his brothers and his wife Draupadī; when he lost the game, Draupadī was dragged into the royal court by a Kaurava prince. While the royal court watched in shock, the prince proceeded to forcibly remove Draupadī's clothes on the pretext that even her clothes belonged to him. Draupadī desperately called Kṛṣṇa's name, thus surrendering herself to him, even though he was hundreds of miles away in Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa instantaneously came to Draupadī's rescue: as the Kaurava prince tugged at Draupadī's robes, more and more of them kept coming, miraculously, until the prince finally had to stop and admit defeat.

Q. Rāma destroys Laṅkā

Rāma crossed the sea and went to Laṅkā to rescue his wife, Sītā, who had been kidnaped by the demon Rāvaṇa. After a fierce battle, he destroyed Laṅkā.
Discussion: Dimmitt, 88.

R. Kṛṣṇa steals butter and is bound to a mortar

The young Kṛṣṇa was fond of stealing butter and yogurt. His irate mother tied him to a mortar so she could keep an eye on him. Kṛṣṇa crawled with the mortar between two trees and destroyed the trees in the process.
Discussion: Dimmitt, 112–13.

S. Kṛṣṇa vanquishes seven bulls and marries Nappiṉṉai

Kṛṣṇa wanted to marry Nappiṉṉai, the daughter of the cowherd Kumbha. He won her hand by destroying seven bulls who were actually seven demons.
Discussion: Ate, 385–92.

T. Viṣṇu incarnates as a fish

To save Manu and his family from a flood, Viṣṇu incarnated himself as a fish. He instructed Manu to gather the seeds of life and load them in a huge boat. Then, when the floods came, the boat was bound to the fish; in this way Manu and the chosen beings rode out the storm.
Discussion: O'Flaherty, 181–84, Dimmitt, 71–74.

U. Rāma builds bridge across the sea

When Rāma heard that Sītā was being held captive in Laṅkā, he gathered an army of monkeys and built a bridge across the sea to Laṅkā.
Discussion: Dimmitt, 87.

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V. Hanumān carries a message to Sītā and causes havoc in Laṅkā

Because of Rāma's friendship with Sugrīva, Sugrīva's minister Hanumān was dispatched to seek Sītā. Hanumān saw her in Laṅkā and then allowed himself to be caught. He was taken to Rāvaṇa's court. Later, before returning to Rāma, he caused havoc in the gardens of Laṅkā and set the city on fire.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 87.

W. Rāma kills Vāli

While searching for his wife Sītā, Rāma met and made friends with a monkey, Sugrīva. Sugrīva had a feud with his brother Vāli, who wanted to kill him; Rāma intervened and killed Vāli on behalf of Sugrīva.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 87.

X. Rāma kills Tāḍakā

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa were taken by the sage Viśvāmitra to protect his sacrifice. On the way, they encountered the demon-woman Tāḍakā and Rāma killed her.

Discussion: Dimmitt, 86.

Y. Kṛṣṇa dances with the pots

This episode is not referred to in any primary text that I have encountered. The commentators are of the opinion that when Kṛṣṇa and his friends stole butter and yogurt, they danced with the pots that contained them.

Discussion: Ate, 392–95.

Z. Kṛṣṇa knocks down the wood-apple tree

Kapitthāsura, a demon sent by Kaṁsa, took the form of a wood apple tree, planning to fall on Kṛṣṇa and kill him. Meanwhile, Kṛṣṇa encountered another demon in the form of a calf (Vatsāsura) and threw the calf at the tree, thus killing both of them. (Summarized from Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar.)

Discussion: Ate, 136.

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Appendix 3a

Parallels between Rāmānuja's works and Kūrattāḻvāṉ's Sundara-bāhu-stava

Gītā-bhāṣya Intro.	*Śaraṇāgati-gadya*	*Sundara-bāhu-stava*
The Lord is referred to as the consort of Śrī.	Śrī addressed directly (v. 1).	The Lord's feet described as having the radiance of Śrī (v. 1).
Description of Nārāyaṇa as "He who is entirely auspicious and opposed to everything inauspicious, and whose essential nature consists of bliss" (*nikhila-heya-pratyanīka-kalyāṇaikatānaḥ svetara-samasta-vastu-vilakṣaṇānanta-jñānānandaika-svarūpaḥ*).	Petition for being blessed with *śaraṇāgati* (v. 2). As in the first column (*akhila-heya-pratyanīka*, etc.) (v. 5).	Petition to be united with Rāmānuja.
Attributes of incomparable excellence inherent in the Lord: wisdom, strength, sovereignty, valor, power, and splendor (*svābhāvikānavadhikāśaya-jñāna-balaiśvarya-vīrya-śakti-tejāḥ*).	As in the first column (v. 5).	

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Whose divine form is a treasure house of infinite qualities such as radiance, beauty, fragrance, softness, charm, and youthfulness—qualities that befit him, that cannot be thought of, and that are wondrous, eternal, pure, and supreme.	As in first column (v. 5).	
Svābhimatānurāpaika-rūpācintya-divyā-dbhuta-nitya-nira-vadya-niratiśayaujjva-lya-saundarya-saugandhya-sauku-mārya-lāvaṇya-yauvan-ādy-ananta-guṇa-ni-dhi-divya-rūpaḥ.	Who has perfect conduct, who is full of "maternal" love, gentleness, sincerity, friendliness, equality, mercy, sweetness, majesty, generosity, firmness, fearlessness, and valor (*sauśīlya-vātsalya-mārdavārjava-sauhārda-sāmya-kāruṇya-mādhurya-gāmbhīryaudarya-cāturya-sthairya-dhairya-śaurya-parākrama* (v. 5).	Who has perfect conduct, is full of "maternal love" to his devotees, gentleness, firmness, power, activity (i.e., being determined to act in favor of his devotees), majesty, beauty, softness, equality, and charm (*sauśīlyāśrita-vatsa-latva-mṛdutā-sau-hārda-sāmyārjavair dhairya-sthairya-sauvīrya-śauryākṛtitā-gāmbhīrya-cāturyakaiḥ saundaryānvita-sauku-mārya-samatā-lāvaṇya-mukhyair guṇair devaḥ* (v. 25).
Who has a wonderful array of ornaments,	As in the first column. Enumeration of ornaments (v. 5).	Description of the ornaments (v. 37).
who is equipped with countless weapons,...	Description of weapons—conch, discus, etc.	Description of weapons—conch, discus, etc. (v. 38).

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who is the consort of Śrī [the goddess], she who has countless auspicious qualities of incomparable superiority, such as her essential nature, exquisite form, attributes, glorious possessions, sovereignty, and grace—qualities which are eternal and unmatched, and are conforming and pleasing to him (*svābhimatānurūpa-nitya-niravadya-svarūpa-rūpa-guṇa-vibhavaiśvarya-śīlādy-anavadhikātiśayāsaṅkhyeya-kalyāṇa-guṇa-gaṇa-śrīvallabhaḥ*).	As in the first column. *Svābhimata-nitya-niravadyānurūpa-* (continues as in first column).	Description of Śrī (v. 69).
	...and the consort of Bhū and Nīḷā.	Description of Bhū and Nīḷā (v. 70).
Description of the celestial attendants who wait on the Lord.	As in first column. Description in almost identical terms.	Description of the celestial attendants Garuḍa, Visvaksena, etc. (vs. 72–74).
Description of Vaikuṇṭha and the joy of being there.	Description of Vaikuṇṭha in similar terms (v. 5).	Description of Vaikuṇṭha (vs. 77–80).
Vaikuṇṭha is beyond the reach of speech and thought even for *yogīs*.	Vaikuṇṭha is beyond the reach of speech and thought even for *yogīs* (v. 81).	
It is the Lord's sport (*līlā*) to bring forth, develop, and dissolve the universe.	It is the Lord's sport to bring forth, develop, and dissolve the universe (v. 5).	It is the Lord's sport (*krīḍā*) to bring forth, develop, and dissolve the universe (v. 81).

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Appendix 3b

An example of similarity in style and expression among the works of the Aḻvārs, Yāmuna, Rāmānuja, and Kūrattāḻvān

Āḻvārs	*The Jewel*	*Vai.-gadya*	*Vai.-stava*
The Lord is dear as a father, a mother, a damsel with beautiful eyes; he is dear as great wealth (*Tvm* 5.1.8).	The one with *vakula* flowers is like a father, a mother, a wife, children, and great wealth; he is the master of my family (v. 5). When will I see with my eyes your lotus feet?	When shall I see with my eyes my Lord Nārāyaṇa, who is the master, the lord, the wealth of my clan, who is my very enjoyment, my father, my mother, and my everything?	
I long for my father's feet to be on my head (*Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* 1). O Vāmana! When am I to attain your blessed feet? When am I to reach your resplendent feet? (*Tvm* 3.2.2 and 3.2.6).	O Trivikrama, when will your lotus feet—marked with the conch, discus, wish-fulfilling tree, banner, lotus, goad and thunderbolt—adorn my head? (v. 31).	When will my Lord's lotus feet be held on my head?	When will your feet—adorned with marks of the thunderbolt, goad, banner, lotus, conch, discus, fish, container of nectar, and wish fulfilling tree—cover my head? When will your feet adorn my head? (vs. 70–71).
	With all my other desires quieted, with you as my Lord, when shall I delight you by constantly serving you as your exclusive, eternal servant?	With all other desires quenched by the love of serving the Lord's lotus feet, when will I reach those feet? (para. 3)	

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Appendix 4

This is a list of verses of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* commented on by Vaṭakku Tiruvīti Piḷḷai (thirteenth century) in his *Īṭu-mupatt-āṟāyirappaṭi* (*The Thirty-six Thousand*), in which the commentary quotes or otherwise mentions Rāmānuja.

i: introduction.
q: Rāmānuja is quoted directly.
m: Rāmānuja is mentioned.
y: Yāmuna's interpretation also included in the commentary.
t: commented on in the 24000.

1.1.1	q	3.7 i	q	7.10.5	m
1.2 i	q	4.3.5	m	7.10.11	q
1.2.9	m	4.4.10	m	8.4.5	m
1.3 i	m	4.5.7	q	8.7.3	q
1.4.3	q	4.7.5	m	8.9.3	q
2.1.7	q	4.8.2	q	9.4.3	qy
2.3.1	qy	4.10 i	m	9.5 i	m
2.3.3	qy	5.1.9	qy	9.5.10	q
2.5.1	qy	5.2 i	qy	9.6.9	q
2.7.5	qy	5.2.6	qt	9.7.5	q
2.9.8	qy	5.3.6	q	9.8.1	m
2.10 i	qy	5.10 i	m	9.9 i	qy
2.10.4	q	5.10.6	my	9.9.8	q
3.2.1	q	6.1.10	qy	10.2.1	m
3.3.6	qy	6.7.1	m	10.4 i	my
3.4.10	q	7.2.10	q	10.6.1	qm
3.6.6	q	7.9.1	qy	10.7.1	q
3.6.8	q	7.9.3	my	10.8.3	q

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Appendix 5

Tvm 1.1.1–11 with Piḷḷāṉ's Commentary

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.1:

Who is he, possessing the highest good?
Who is he, graciously bestowing wisdom and love?
Who is he, the commander of the never-tiring immortals?
O my mind!
  Worship his radiant feet,
  which destroy all sorrow,
and rise.

The Six Thousand:

The Āḻvār with his holy soul "experiences" the supreme person as he really is. This is the supreme person who has transcendent, extraordinary, divine ornaments, weapons, consorts, and attendants[1] and whose sport is the creation, development, etc., of this universe.[2]

The Āḻvār speaks as he experiences the love that arises from his being together with the Lord. [The Āḻvār says,] "[The Lord] is wholly opposed to all fault, and [is characterized] as 'he who has the bliss a thousand times that of human beings [*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.8.1].' [The Lord] is an immense ocean of infinite bliss multiplied a thousand-fold[3] and other auspicious attributes.[4] He who possesses this bliss and other auspicious attributes further has the great quality, like gold's having a fragrance, of making himself known to me without any reason (*nirhetuka-māy*), so that there may not remain even a trace ('whiff') of ignorance. [He arouses in] me unsurpassed *bhakti* toward his sacred feet. This Lord, who has all auspicious attributes, shows his generosity to Śeṣa, Garuḍa, and innumerable other divine beings who are naturally and wholly without fault and have unflickering wisdom. His flowerlike feet have the inherent nature of dispelling all sorrows of his devotees. Serve these feet at all places, times and conditions [as befits] a *śeṣa* and live." Thus speaks [the Āḻvār] to his holy soul.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.2:

Beyond the reach of the inner mind, freed of filth,

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full blown and rising upward
beyond the grasp of sense organs,
He is pure bliss. Know him!
There is none like him
in the past present and future.
He is my life!
There is none higher than him.

The Six Thousand:

[This verse] talks about the wondrous divine nature of [the Lord,] who is the abode of all these [above mentioned] qualities. [This verse] also discusses the difference between that which is opposed to everything defiling and that which is wholly and infinitely auspicious.

[The Āḻvār] says: O my mind! Bow before the radiant, sorrow-dispelling feet of my Lord,

who is different from the non-sentient things known by our sense organs,

who is different from the essential nature of the extremely pure soul, which is known by the inner organ that has been made extremely pure by the practice of *yoga*,

who has no equal within the three phases of time,

who has no equal or superior,

whose essential nature is wholly wisdom and bliss,

and who is my support.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.3:

He has this, and not that,
dearly elusive to the mind.
The earth and the firmament are his.
He is with form, the formless one.
In the midst of the senses, he is not of them.
Unending, he pervades.
We have attained him, he who possesses bliss.

The Six Thousand:

[This verse] talks about the wealth of the universe, which belongs to the Lord, he whose essential nature, auspicious qualities, and realm are distinct from all other entities.[5]

[The Āḻvār] says: We have obtained the Lord, who is the soul of everything, including the earth, firmament, all worlds, and sentient and non-sentient beings and things; who is the owner (*śeṣī*) of all things; who is the soul of the universe, but free from its shortcomings; who is pure;[6] and who has the wealth that is in the glorious form of controlling the universe as his body; but who is different

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from everything. O my mind! Worship his radiant, sorrow-dispelling feet and rise.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.4
(translated by A.K. Ramanujan):[7]

We here, that man, this man,
  and that other in-between,
and that woman, this woman,
  and that other, whoever,

those people, and these,
  and these others in-between,
this thing, that thing,
  and this other in-between thing, whichever,

All things dying, these things,
  those things, those others in-between,
good things, bad things,
  things that were, that will be,
being all of them,
he stands there.

The Six Thousand:

The previous [three verses] of the *Tiruvāymoḻi* are now explained. The essential nature of all the objects described with various descriptive [phrases] is said to be that of dependence on the Lord.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.5:

Each one according to his intellect,
and in his own way,
attains his god's feet.
  These gods do not lack anything.
The Lord has determined
for each person to attain his destiny.

The Six Thousand:

This verse says that the essential nature [necessary] for accomplishing works is dependence on the Lord.

Those men who practice rituals (*karma*) like the Jyotiṣṭoma and so on as means (*sādhana*) for attaining paradise (*svarga*), etc., propitiate Indra and others to the extent of their knowledge. To get the fruit of their wishes they resort

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to the [various deities] by means of the respective rituals. [We see] that those human beings who resort to Indra and others in the way prescribed by the holy texts do indeed get the fruits they wish for; we can therefore say that Indra and the other deities thus resorted to are not lacking [in power] to fulfill their devotees' desires. It is the supreme person himself who stands as the inner soul of Indra and other divine beings and becomes the [gods] propitiated by all rituals.

If you ask for the authority for this we have [several statements] from *śruti* and *smṛti*.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.6:

[He pervades] those who stand, sit, lie, wander,
and those who do not stand, sit, lie, wander.
He changes constantly; he is elusive to the mind.
He is constant and unchanging; he stands strong.

The Six Thousand:

This verse says that all action and non-action of all sentient and non-sentient things, and also all other objects, are incumbent on the will of the supreme person.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.7:

Becoming all things,
spread on open space, fire,
wind, water, and earth,
he is diffused through them all.
Hidden, he pervades,
like life in a body.
The radiant scripture speaks
of the divine one who ate all this.

The Six Thousand:

In the earlier three verses it is said, by *samānādhikaraṇa* [grammatical agreement; correlation; the condition of residing in the same substance], that the creation and movement of the earth are dependent on the Lord. Now, by *samānādhikaraṇa*, we say that the union between the universe and the Lord is that between body and soul.

Just as this soul rules this body and pervades it, the Lord also pervades and rules (*niyantṛ*) the world, the five elements, and all other objects. This is established irrefutably by valid sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). He is different from all objects in the two states of cause and effect, as well as from the beings

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who are bound, free, and eternally free. His essential nature consists of wisdom, bliss, and purity. He is opposed to all filth and possesses unlimited, auspicious, glorious attributes; his pastime is the sport of creating, protecting, and destroying the worlds; he is the soul of the entire universe; his body is the entire universe; he is without any *karma*; he has as his body all souls and matter, and he is their soul; he is pure and not affected by the happiness, sorrow, change, and imperfections of all other entities. This is the supreme person....

[Here there are seventy-three scriptural quotations.]

....So say *smṛti* and *itihāsa*. These [statements] are also found in radiant revealed literature (*śruti*), which has not been composed by human beings and which is irrefutable. Thus Lokāyata, Māyāvāda, Bhāskara, Yādava Prakāśa, and other sectarian viewpoints (Tamil: *camayam*) different from the *Vedas* are rejected.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.8:

Beyond the range of the divine ones' intelligence,
He, the first one of the skies and everything thereon,
Cause of the Creator, most supreme one, ate them all!
He indwells; as Śiva and Brahmā,
he burnt the triple cities, he enlightened the immortals;
As them he destroys and then creates the worlds.

The Six Thousand:

This verse refutes those who hold heterodox doctrines and who identify the Lord described in *śruti* with Brahmā, who creates, or Rudra, who destroys.... [Here are given four scriptural quotations.]...These sentences say: Within the egg, Brahmā was born; to this Brahmā was born Rudra. Brahmā and Rudra, born within the egg, do not know about *prakṛti, mahat, ahaṅkāra,* and other things which lie outside. They cannot create or destroy them. It is the Lord who both creates and destroys. This is stated in the following quotations:....[Here there are two quotations.]...Just as the Lord, by being within the four-faced one [i.e., Brahmā] instructed the immortals, and by being within Rudra destroyed the Tripura, thus by the same logic he, by being within Brahmā and Rudra, creates and destroys everything within the egg. Even they do not know it is the Lord within them who is responsible for this. By all this [the Āḻvār] says that we know the Lord is the *īśvara* of Brahmā and Rudra.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.9:

If you say he exists, he does:
his forms are these forms.

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If you say he does not,
his formlessness
is of these non-forms.

If he has the qualities
of existence and non-existence,
he is in two states,
he who pervades without end.

The Six Thousand:

This verse refutes the Buddhist *śūnya-vādī,* who clings to a wrong interpretation of the *Vedas* and says, "There is no authority to be ascertained; everything is *śūnya* [empty]. Therefore there is no *Veda,* no God who is made known by the *Veda,* and no universe which is his wealth."

We ask you, the *śūnya-vādī,* you who insist that God does not exist: How can you declare that he exists or does not exist? Either way, we cannot establish the negative thing that you think of. If you ask how, [we say:] In this world, words of existence and non-existence, as well as self-evident ideas of existence and non-existence, are made known by being discernible [in some way]. Therefore, to say God exists is to say he is an object of existence; if not, he is an object of non-existence. Thus when we say that there are negative terms about the existence of God, we can only say that they indicate his existence. Even if there are no terms of negation, we can say they are objects of "not-being." These terms of being and non-being (*asti-nāsti-rūpa-padārthaṅkal*) are the form (*rūpa*) of the Lord by the *pramāṇas* quoted earlier. By saying that he has qualities (*guṇa*) of being and non-being, thus if you say he is (*asti*), he exists, and if you say he is not (*nāsti*), he still exists. [The Āḻvār] says: Even where he does not seem to be, he is the inner soul of all, and therefore he exists. Thus the *śūnya-vādī* is refuted.

[Here Piḷḷāṉ has used terminology very similar to Rāmānuja's in his refuting the *śūnya-vādī*. See *Śrī-bhāṣya* 2.2.30.]

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.10:

He is diffused in every drop of the cool, expansive sea,
and over this expansive earth,
all the lands and all of space, not missing a spot.

He, the steady one, who ate all this,
is hidden in every shining place.
He pervades everything, everywhere.

The Six Thousand:

[The Āḻvār] says: O my mind! Worship the radiant sorrow-dispelling feet of

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my Lord. This Lord is in the waters of the sea, in the smallest atom, in the earth, in the firmament, and in the worlds. He pervades the most subtle of material objects, as well as all sentient beings, with the same ease and independence with which he pervades the gross world. This Lord is declared to be so by irrefutable authority.

Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.11:

These ten verses out of the thousand
composed with the right order by Kurukūr Caṭakōpaṉ—
on the feet of the great one who stands strong
in space, fire, air, water, earth,
in sound, strength, force, grace, and sustenance—
[will grant] heaven.

The Six Thousand:

This *tiruvāymoḻi* [i.e., set of verses] teaches about the Lord, who is distinguished by the two realms which are instruments of his sport and enjoyment.[8] Its meaning fittingly makes one obtain his sacred feet.

[The Āḻvār,] out of devotion, sings a thousand [verses] which form a circle [i.e., garland] for the Lord, so that by looking at the beauty of this *tiruvāymoḻi* and its arrangement, the richness of its meaning, the beauty of its melody—the combination of all this which gives birth to wondrous love—and by seeing that it is without any falsehood, "people of the Tamil land, musicians, and devotees"[9] may sing and proclaim about the Lord, who is wonderfully auspicious.

Notes

1. This list is an abbreviated version of Rāmānuja's description of Viṣṇu. See, for instance, *Gītā-bhāṣya* (*Gb*), Introduction (in *Rgm*, ed. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar, p. 37); *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* (*Vs*), ed. van Buitenen, para. 127 (*Rgm*, p. 51).

2. *Nikhila-jagad-udaya-vibhava-ādi-līlamāy*. Rāmānuja frequently uses this phrase. See *Gb*, introduction, in *Rgm* p. 37; *Vs*, in *Rgm*, p. 3.

3. Piḷḷāṉ employs a phrase that Rāmānuja uses in the description of bliss. See *Śrī-bhāṣya*, 1.1.13; in *Rgm*, p. 87.

4. *Asaṅkhyeya-kalyāṇa-guṇa-mahodadhi*, perhaps the most frequently used phrase by Rāmānuja in talking about God. See, for instance, *Gb*, Introduction.

5. *Svetara-samasta-vastu-vilakṣaṇa-svarūpa*. The same phrase is used by Rāmānuja. See *Vs* in *Rgm*, pp. 1 and 41; *Śrī-bhāṣya* 2.1.23. This is also seen with a slight variation in *Gb* 2.29.

6. The major thrust of the first few paragraphs of *Vs* (*Rgm*, pp. 1–2) is to talk about (a) the Lord's "purity and opposition to all filth," and (b) his distinct

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nature of being separate from spirit and matter while also being their inner controller. Piḷḷāṉ addresses both these points early in the commentary.

In his comment on *Tvm* 1.1.3, Piḷḷāṉ talks of the Lord being the inner soul [of the universe which is his body,] the owner (*śeṣī*), and the controller. The same list is used by Rāmānuja in *Gb* 10.20, 13.22, and 13.28. Rāmānuja adds one more term of description in his commentary, saying that the Lord is the support (*ādhāra*) of everyone and everything.

7. Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning*, p. 3.

8. "Instruments of sport and enjoyment" (*līlopakaraṇa, bhogopakaraṇa*), phrases used often by Rāmānuja. See *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*, van Buitenen's edition, para. 132 (*Rgm*, pp. 39–40).

9. A phrase from *Tvm* 1.5.11.

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Notes

Introduction

1. *Bhakti* is derived from the root *bhaj*, "to divide, distribute, share;" *bhakti* is "division, belonging to, devotion, worship, piety, faith, or devotion (as a religious principle or means of salvation, together with *karman*, 'works' and *jñāna*, 'spiritual knowledge')." Meanings taken from Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 743. There are several excellent studies on the etymology of *bhakti;* a brief but good bibliography on the subject is found in Dhavamony, *Love of God According to Śaiva Siddhānta*, 11 n. 1.

The Āḻvārs use the words *patti* and *pattar*, which are the Tamil forms of *bhakti* and *bhakta* ("devotee"), but more frequently they use the words *nēcam* ("love, affection, piety"), *kātal* ("love, lust, devotion, longing"), or *aṉpu* ("love, affection, grace, devotion").

2. The Śrī Vaiṣṇavas are devotees of Viṣṇu and his consorts—Śrī, Bhūmi, and Nīlā—and hold the works of the Tamil mystics (Āḻvārs) to be equal to the Sanskrit *Vedas*. Their most important teacher is Rāmānuja.

The word *vaiṣṇava* occurs in Āḻvār poetry—as in Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* (5.5.11) and Periyāḻvār's *Tirumoḻi* (5.1.3)—but the word *śrī-vaiṣṇava* is used for the first time, to the best of my knowledge, in Piḷḷāṉ's commentary on the *Tiruvāymoḻi* (3.9.1, 4.6.8, and 6.1.11).

3. The Sanskrit word *prapatti* comes from the root *prapad*, "to drop down, go forward, take refuge with," and is considered synonymous with the word *śaraṇāgati*. *Śaraṇa* is "protection, succor, refuge, place of shelter;" *śaraṇāgati* is "to approach for protection, refuge, or sanctuary." Meanings taken from Monier-William's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* and Apte, *A Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

The Sanskrit word *āśraya* ("refuge, abode, shelter") is also used frequently by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. The *ācāryas* frequently use the word *āśrita* ("dependent, a servant") to indicate a devotee. The word is used in a generic fashion to refer to those involved in *bhakti-yoga*, as well as to those who see *prapatti* as the only way to reach the Lord. The twelfth-century teacher Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, who is very careful with his choice of words and grammar (he quotes from or refers to the celebrated grammarian Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* at least 127 times), calls Gajendra (the elephant-devotee of Viṣṇu) a *bhakta*, a *prapanna*, and an *āśrita*.

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The Tamil word *aṭaikkalam* is occasionally used by the Āḻvārs and some later *ācāryas* to indicate the act of taking refuge. *Aṭaikkalam* originally means "a deposit made and accepted for safekeeping." The connotations and history of this word have been dealt with in detail by T.P. Meenakshisundaran in his article "Śaraṇāgati," where he suggests that it refers to the act of entrusting an object to someone who would guard it with his life.

4. Vedānta Deśika, *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, ed. Rāmātecikācāriyar Svāmi, vol. 2, p. 224.

5. I use the word "goal" in a limited sense, as referring to devotion and the attainment of the Lord. This book will not deal with other interpretations of "goal," i.e., philosophical definitions of liberation (*mokṣa*), descriptions of heaven (Vaikuṇṭha), etc.

6. The *Pāñcarātra* literature is concerned with theistic temple ritual worship and devotion dedicated to Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa and is variously placed between 450 and 850 C.E. The *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the epic *Mahābhārata* is said to contain *Pāñcarātra* influence.

The extensive body of research done by H. Daniel Smith, seen in his many books and films, is invaluable in trying to understand *Pāñcarātra* literature and its influence on the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. For a listing of Professor Smith's works that bear upon this subject, see the bibliography. Walter Neevel has also shown the importance of *Pāñcarātra* in Yāmuna's theology, in *Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra*. Mangalam Parameswaran's dissertation "The Two-fold Vedānta of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism" and Sudakshina Rangaswamy's "Influence of Pāñcarātrāgamas on Viśiṣṭādvaita" are also directly relevant to this issue.

7. John Carman has tentatively assigned the dates 1077–1157 C.E. to Rāmānuja. *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 27.

8. The origin of the terms Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai is not known, but they have gained currency only in the last few centuries. They are usually understood as indicating the preference of texts written in certain languages—the Vaṭakalai, or "northern culture," emphasizing texts written in the northern language of Sanskrit, and the Teṅkalai laying stress on Tamil, or "southern," literature. This interpretation is found in several books and articles but does not take seriously the Śrī Vaiṣṇava claim of following the "twin Vedānta." It is striking that Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, whom the Teṅkalais consider their first *ācārya* after Rāmānuja, wrote primarily in Sanskrit, while Piḷḷāṉ, supposedly the first Vaṭakalai *ācārya*, wrote a commentary on the "Tamil *Veda*" (the *Tiruvāymoḻi* of Nammāḻvār). This commentary was in Maṇipravāḷa, a hybrid of Sanskrit and Tamil, with Tamil endings. Today, commentaries are written on Tamil and Sanskrit works by both Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai Śrī Vaiṣṇavas. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava community has prided itself on being the inheritor of a twofold Vedānta, with scriptures in Tamil and Sanskrit. All worship services are in both languages. To allege that one set of writings is sacrificed at the cost of another is to disre-

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gard history.

A more plausible origin of the words Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai has been suggested: that the movement called Vaṭakalai became important in the northern areas of Tamilnadu and the areas of Karnataka and Andhra. The reference thus seems more to do with geography than with the language of the books venerated by the sects. N. Jagadeesan has discussed this briefly and has accepted the geographic notions of Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai in *History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country: Post-Ramanuja,* 182–83, but a few pages later (p. 188) he remarks, "It is easy for one to see that the Vaḍagalai contempt for the Tamil Prabandhas is scarcely veiled."

For the history of legal conflict between the Vaṭakalais and Teṅkalais during the last two centuries, see Arjun Appadurai, *Worship and Conflict under Colonial Rule*.

I have discussed the theological differences between Deśika and Piḷḷai Lōkācārya in my doctoral dissertation, "The Śrīvaiṣṇava Understanding of *Bhakti* and *Prapatti:* The Āḻvārs to Vedānta Deśika."

9. John Carman has noted the importance of the associates of Rāmānuja in *The Theology of Rāmānuja*. He has a brief discussion on the works of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, Bhaṭṭar, and Piḷḷāṉ in Chapter 17, "Rāmānuja's Relation to his Successors: The Problem of the Gadyas." M. Parameswaran has also acknowledged their importance and has discussed some of the works in his master's thesis, "The Two-fold Vedānta of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism." The best study of commentarial and Maṇipravāḷa literature (including the works of some associates of Rāmānuja) in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition is K.K.A. Venkatachari's *Maṇipravāḷa Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*.

10. Aruḷālapperumāḷ Emperumāṉār wrote *Jñāna-sāra* and *Prameya-sāra,* and Yādava Prakāśa, the teacher-turned-disciple of Rāmānuja, wrote an important treatise on *sannyāsa* called *Yati-dharma-samuccaya*. Tiruvaraṅkattu Amutaṉār composed a poem in praise of Rāmānuja called *Irāmānuca Nūṟṟantāti,* which is usually included in editions of *The Sacred Four Thousand*. See also Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja,* 301 n. 18, and Jagadeesan, *History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country: Post-Ramanuja,* chap. 3.

11. A.K.Rāmānujan's excellent study on Nammāḻvār, *Hymns for the Drowning,* and Friedhelm Hardy's *Viraha-bhakti* have been major contributions in recent studies on the Āḻvār literature. For other works in the field, see the reference list on page x of the Introduction to *Hymns for the Drowning*, and the bibliography in my article "Hindu Devotional Literature: The Tamil Connection."

12. Robert Lester's *Rāmānuja on the Yoga,* "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism: The Concept of Prapatti or Śaraṇāgati" (1966), and "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism (in the light of the *Āṟāyirappaḍi* to Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*)" (1981).

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13. Dr. Lester ends his essay "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism" (1981) with the question "Is it that a 'Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism' adopts Rāmānuja?"

As we shall see in a later chapter, Lester's arguments rest to a considerable degree on the question of authenticity of the *Gadya-traya* of Rāmānuja. J.Lipner, in *The Face of Truth*, a recent study on Rāmānuja's theology, does not advance any new arguments against their authenticity, but while acknowledging that this case cannot be "resolved with certainty one way or the other" nevertheless says that he veers "towards those who doubt rather than those who accept the traditional view of authorship" (p. 116).

14. Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, p. 15.

15. Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, p. 480.

16. In passing, it must be noted that while Rāmānuja does not quote from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, his disciple Bhaṭṭar quotes (approvingly) from it (2.5.15) three times.

17. I have stated my disagreements with Professor Hardy's position in my article "Hindu Devotional Literature."

18. It should be recognized, of course, that while *bhakti* was (and has remained) a dominant aspect of religion in India since the seventh century C.E., tantric ritual and Vedāntic philosophy were also vital forces in the background of several medieval theologians.

19. Rāmānanda is one of the most important figures in the history of Indian *bhakti*. He is the principal human link (the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* being the main textual link) in the transmission of *bhakti* from the South to the North. The *Guru Granth Ratnavali*, published by Punjabi University, records his dates as 1366–1467 and says (p. 103) that he was "a follower of Swami Raghavacharya of the cult of Ramanuj[a] (1017–1137)." One of his poems, the "Rag basant," is incorporated in the *Holy Granth*.

20. Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti* and "Mādhavēndra Purī: A Link between Bengal Vaiṣṇavism and South Indian *Bhakti*."

21. John Hawley, *Krishna, The Butter Thief*, 37–45. Hawley has also discussed several other works, authored by people from the South, which may have influenced Sūrdās.

22. See B. Kakati, "Vaiṣṇavism of Assam and Southern India."

23. See Khushwant Singh's *A History of the Sikhs*, vol.1., pp. 20 and 23–25; and "Sikhism," in the *Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions*, 688. Darshan Singh's *Indian Bhakti Tradition and Sikh Gurus* also recognizes the importance of the Āḻvārs and the later teachers Rāmānuja and Rāmānanda, but there are several outdated ideas about South Indian *bhakti* in this book.

A book which does not make explicit connections but which is excellent reading if one wants to understand *bhakti* in the Sant tradition is *Sikh Studies:*

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Comparative Perspectives on a Changing Tradition, ed. M. Juergensmeyer and N. G. Barrier, especially section 2, "The Origins of Sikhism."

24. See Raymond Williams, *A New Face of Hinduism: The Swaminarayan Religion*, especially pp. 10–11, 26–27, and 78–82.

Chapter One

1. The recitation of the *Sacred Anthology of Four Thousand Verses* begins and ends with ritual lines seeking refuge in Nammāḻvār, Rāmānuja, and "Jīyar," who is identified as Maṇavāḷa Māmuṇi by the Teṅkalais.

The Splendor of the Succession of Teachers (*Guru-paramparā-prabhāvam*), a Śrī Vaisnava hagiography written in the thirteenth or fourteenth century C.E., states the importance of Nammāḻvār thus:

> If it is asked, "Why is Nammāḻvār the most important among the Āḻvārs?" [we say] that it is because he gave the meaning of the thousand-branched *Veda* through four works in such a way that everyone had the qualification to [recite them], and also because he, pleased with Nāthamuni, graciously bestowed the *Sacred Four Thousand Verses* and all other essential truths of the philosophy (*darśana-tātparyaṅkaḷ*) so that the philosophy could be firmly established.
>
> (*The Splendor*, p. 295)

For a discussion on the accounts of Nammāḻvār's life, see Hardy, "The Tamil Veda of a *Śūdra* Saint."

2. *Tiruvāymoḻi* 10.4.3-4:

> I saw the sacred feet of young Piṉṉai's unique lord,
> and wore them as an ornament on my head.
>
> I wore the feet as an ornament on my head,
> [the sacred feet] of the Lord who sleeps on the banyan leaf,
> Who stands on the hill as the celestials worship,
> Who established himself in my mind
> and dwells there without moving.

3. Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning*, 103.

4. The word *āḻvār* occurs for the first time (in the literature I have surveyed) in Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ's commentary (*The Six Thousand*) on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi* (*Tvm*). Piḷḷāṉ frequently paraphrases the poem as a statement of "the Āḻvār." The first occurence of the word is in his comment on *Tvm* 1.1.1.

Traditionally derived from the root *āḻ* ("deep"), the word *āḻvār* is said to

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mean "those who are deeply immersed in love [of Viṣṇu]." Ramanujan accepts the traditional meaning and acknowledges that the title of his book *Hymns for the Drowning* "plays on the meanings of such an immersion for poet and reader" (*Hymns*, p. ix). Hardy regards this as a strained derivation and conjectures that the word means "lord" or "master" (*Viraha-bhakti*, 250–51). Without further persuasive evidence, I find no reason at this stage to dismiss the original derivation and meaning.

5. Ramanujan, *Hymns*, 132.

6. Dating the Āḻvārs has proved a difficult task. For a complete review of the pertinent literature in this century, see Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, 262–69 and nn. 69–74.

A. Gōvindāchārya, writing in the beginning of this century, still accepts the traditional dating and places Nammāḻvār as being born at the beginning of the Kali-yuga, which, according to some Hindus, began in 3102 B.C.E. (Gōvindāchārya, *Holy Lives of the Azhwārs*, lxviii–l).

7. This is the order in the editions published by P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar. In the edition of *The Sacred Four Thousand* published by K. Veṅkaṭacāmi Reṭṭiyār, the *Tvm* is the third thousand and the section called *Iyaṛpā* (which is the third thousand in other editions and which includes the works of the first three Āḻvārs) is printed as the fourth section.

Sometimes the *Caṭakōpar Antāti* and *Tiruvāymoḻi Nūṛṛantāti* are printed along with the Āḻvār works.

8. The *Irāmānuca* (i.e., *Rāmānuja*) *Nūṛṛantāti* was composed around the late eleventh century C.E. by Tiruvaraṅkattu Amutaṇār, a disciple of Rāmānuja, in praise of his master. This is the only non-Āḻvār work that is included in the traditional anthology of both Teṅkalai and Vaṭakalai versions of *The Sacred Four Thousand*. While the Vaṭakalai versions list it as the twenty-fifth item in the corpus (counting the *Tiruppallāṇṭu* and *Tirumoḻi* of Periyāḻvār as two different pieces), the Teṅkalais count both works of Periyāḻvār as one and number the hymn on Rāmānuja as the twenty-fourth item. Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai editions both assume that the canon has twenty-four pieces, a number that reflects, according to the oral interpretations I have heard, the twenty-four syllables in the sacred Gāyatrī *mantra* (also called the Sāvitrī: *Ṛg Veda* 3.57.10), which is given to Hindu boys at the time of investiture with the sacred thread. *The Sacred Four Thousand* is therefore called "the Gāyatrī for those who have surrendered to the lord" (*prapanna-gāyatrī*). I am indebted to C. Jagannathachariar, former U.G.C. Professor and Vice-principal of Vivekananda College, for this interpretation.

9. Vedānta Deśika, *Rahasya-traya-sāra*, ed. Rāmātēcikācāriyar Svāmi, vol. 1, pp. 3 and 7.

10. *The Splendor*, 117–19. For a full account of this "revelation," see Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 1. On the lack of conclusive evi-

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dence to support Nāthamuni's "discovery" of *The Sacred Four Thousand*, see Neevel, *Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra*, 199–201.

11. For details on individual works of *The Sacred Four Thousand* being called *Veda*, see Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 1.

12. The *Tiruppāvai* of Āṇṭāḷ, the only woman Āḻvār, is extremely important to the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community in their ritual and meditation. See Hudson, "Bathing in Krishna."

Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai, a thirteenth-century theologian, said that the *Tiruppāvai* embodied the "essence of all the *Upaniṣads*" (*Mūvāyiṟappaṭi*, p. 202), and he introduces his commentary to the *Tiruppāvai* thus:

> The difference between ordinary human beings and holy men who know the true nature of their souls (*ātma-svarūpa*) is similar to that between an atom and a mountain. This difference (holds successively) between the Āḻvārs and Periyāḻvār, and Periyāḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ.
>
> (*Mūvāyiṟappaṭi*, p. 13)

13. This issue has been dealt with in Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 1.

14. See Yāmuna's *Stotra-ratna* (*Jewel of Hymns*), verse 5. This tradition is followed by Kūrattāḻvāṉ, Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, and Vedānta Deśika.

15. Maṇavāḷa Māmuṉi, commentary on Piḷḷai Lōkācārya's *Śrī Vacanabhūṣaṇam, sūtra* 34.

16. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava *guru-paramparā*, or lineage of spiritual preceptors, begins with Viṣṇu and goes in this order: Śrī, Viśvaksena, Nammāḻvār, Nāthamuni, Yāmuna, and Rāmānuja. Then it follows individual lines of *ācāryas*, with the teachers appointed by Rāmānuja and accepted in varying measures by the Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai sects.

17. For example, see *Tvm* 6.1.2, 8.9.8, *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.4.1, 4.4.7, etc.

18. The name Pauḻiyaṉ is explained in the *Tamil Lexicon* as "God as described in the *Ṛg Veda*."

19. This matter is dealt with in Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 1.

20. Worship in Śrī Vaiṣṇava temples is conducted according to the *Pāñcarātra* or *Vaikhānasa* rites. The temples at Tirumala-Tirupati (Tiruvēṅkaṭam in the Āḻvār literature), Kāñcipuram, and Śrīvilliputtūr, and a few other places follow the *Vaikhānasa* literature for their rituals. The theology is quite distinct from *Pāñcarātra*, but it is possible to interpret the Āḻvārs' songs in light of *Vaikhānasa* literature. For more on *Vaikhānasa* temples, see Dennis Hudson, "The Vaiṣṇava Temple with Three Floors for Icons."

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21. In this context, see Ruth Katz, "The *Sauptika* Episode in the Structure of the *Mahābhārata,*" especially 116–17.

22. Dennis Hudson has tried to understand Periyāḻvār and Āṇṭāḷ against the temple background in his articles "Āṇṭāḷ's Enjoyment of God" and "The Vaiṣṇava Temple with Three Floors for Icons."

Sudakshina Rangaswami's dissertation "Influence of Pāñcarātrāgamas on Viśiṣṭādvaita" is also directly relevant to this topic. The āgamic origins of temple rituals are discussed in considerable detail in Vanamala Parthasarathi's dissertation "Evolution of Rituals in Viṣṇu Temple Utsavas, with special reference to Śrīraṅgam, Tirumalai and Kāñci."

23. The references are either to the three forms or the four forms, (I have translated the Tamil words *mūrti* and *uru* as "form"); thus one can interpret them as Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, and where the four forms are indicated one can assume Vāsudeva, the meta-emanation, to be the primary form. The Āḻvār references are usually just to the number, and the commentators have understood them in various ways. These are the references:

(a) *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.3.11:

> "Viṣṇucittaṉ has praised the mountain-like Lord of the mountain Māliruñcōlai, *his four vast forms* (*nāliru mūrti*)."

(b) *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 4.7.10:

> "He appeared among the three and among the three took three forms (*mūṉṟu uru*)."

Perhaps this indicates Viṣṇu appearing among the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva and then subdividing into Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. Śrī P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar, however, interprets "the three" as referring to relationships, and Lynn Ate tentatively paraphrases it as "appearing in the three worlds,...he took on three forms" (Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 320–22). Dennis Hudson has suggested in a letter that Vāsudeva becomes Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, and that they all became Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva in the *brahmāṇḍa*.

(c) Nammāḻvār's *Tvm* 3.6.2:

> "Spread [the word about]...the *mūrti* who became three, and...the first one of the first three."

In a letter, Dennis Hudson has said that it is noteworthy that while the Pāñcarātra does have the pattern of one becoming three (Vāsudeva becoming Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha), the Vaikhānasa does not, though it has the pattern of one becoming four.

(d) Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār's *Tiruccanta-viruttam* 4:

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"Becoming the three forms (*mūrtis*), he became three, three, three, and three."

This line can be interpreted as the three gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva (or possibly the three emanations) and the twelve sub-*vyūhas* of Keśava, et al.

The interpretations are obviously complicated by our lack of knowledge of which three or four (or six or eight) items are being referred to by the Āḻvārs. Numerical mysticism, especially of the variety found in Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār's writings, can only be understood in tentative terms at this point, until further work can be done in this area.

24. Sanjukta Gupta, while discussing the various categories of *Pāñcarātra āgamas*, says that when the text is addressed to the four *vyūhas* it falls under the category of *āgama-siddhānta*, and when it centers on the worship of the twelve forms of Viṣṇu, it is classified as a *mantra-siddhānta*. Gupta, tr., *Lakṣmī Tantra*, xviii n. 2.

25. In *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* (5.4.1) the poet says that he has made the sign of the discus on himself, and in *Tiruppallāṇṭu* (7) he says that his family has been branded with the sacred discus and has served the Lord for generations. The poet speaks of being marked only with the discus and not the discus *and* conch.

The discussions on *pañca-saṁskāra* and the sacrament of *prapatti* in *Pāñcarātra* works have been documented by H. Daniel Smith in *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgama*, vol. 2.

26. *Periya Tirumoḻi* 2.5.9, 2.10.2, 4.2.2, 5.9.9, 6.7.7, 7.8.1, 9.7.6, and 9.10.1.

27. The word *vēḷvi* occurs in earlier Tamil literature in the following places: *Tirumurukkāṟṟuppaṭai* 95–96; *Perupāṇāṟṟuppaṭai* 315–16; *Pattiṟuppattu* 70.18–19 and 74.1–2; *Pattiṟuppattu-patikam* 7.6–7 and 9.15; *Kalitokai* 36.25–26; *Akanāṉūṟu* 13.10–12; and *Puṟanāṉūṟu* 15.20–21, 166.8–26, 224.4–9, and 400.19–20. These references are mentioned in *Pāṭṭum Tokaiyum*, p. 176.

28. For instance, *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 1.8.7, *Periya Tirumoḻi* 9.7.6, etc.

29. Uttamūr Vīrarāghavācāriar interprets each of the *Periya Tirumoḻi* verses mentioned above (n. 26) in this manner.

30. *Śrī-bhāṣya* 1.1.1, while discussing the *kriyā* aspect of *bhakti-yoga*. Thibaut, tr., *The Vedānta-Sūtras with the Commentary of Rāmānuja*, p. 17.

31. The five sacrifices are said to pertain to Brahman (*brahma-yajña*), the divine ones (*deva-yajña*), the elements (*bhūta-yajña*), the forefathers (*pitṛ-yajña*), and human beings (*manuṣya-yajña*). Modern commentators on *The Sacred Four Thousand* add that these are offered with food every day, but no authority is quoted. See, for instance, Uttamūr Vīrarāghavācāriar's commentary on *Periya Tirumoḻi* 5.9.9.

32. V. Rangacharya, "Historical Evolution of Sri Vaishnavism," p. 70.

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33. This is discussed in H. Daniel Smith's excellent article on the subject, "A Typological Survey of Definitions," especially 111–12.

34. Traditional commentators have always believed that the Āḻvārs were familiar with *Pāñcarātra* theology, and this is not an issue that they discuss. Uttamūr Vīrarāghavācāriar, for instance, in explaining *Periya Tirumoḻi* 7.8.1, says, "The Lord of the supreme abode (*parama-pada-nātaṉ*) came graciously in the form of the *vyūhas* to conduct [events] in this wondrous realm of *prakṛti*." The Āḻvārs' knowledge of *Pāñcarātra* is simply taken for granted rather than demonstrated by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition.

35. Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1975), 68–71, especially 70, and *The Smile of Murugan*, chap. 9.

36. See Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1975), 108–9. Apparently, in the nineteenth century, Śrī U. V. Swaminatha Aiyar, a Tamil scholar, discovered the manuscripts of the Tamil Caṅkam anthologies in a monastery at Tiruvāṭuturai.

37. For a discussion on the five landscapes, see Ramanujan, "Form in Classical Tamil Poetry." There are extensive discussions in Ramanujan, *The Interior Landscape*, 104–12; Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, 98–99; and Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murugan*, chap. 6.

38. For the hymns on Murukaṉ in the *Paripāṭal* and in the period immediately after, see Clothey, *The Many Faces of Murukaṉ*, 64–72.

39. Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, parts 3 and 4. For the Tamil background that influenced the poetry of Māṇikkavācakar, see Yocum, *Hymns to the Dancing Śiva*, 32–38.

40. Kaṇṇā and Kaṇṇaṉ are Tamil forms of the name Kṛṣṇa.

41. On the importance of Nappiṉṉai in the Āḻvār poetry, see Dennis Hudson's "Piṉṉai, Krishna's Cowherd Wife," and Edholm and Suneson's "The Seven Bulls and Kṛṣṇa's Marriage to Nīlā/NappiNNai in Sanskrit and Tamil Literature."

42. I have discussed the role of Śrī in later Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology in "The Goddess Śrī: Blossoming Lotus and Breast Jewel of Viṣṇu."

43. The myth of Viṣṇu containing the worlds is present in *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.3–4), *Matsya Purāṇa* (chap. 167), and the *Mahābhārata* ("Book of the Forest," 3.186). The Āḻvārs refer to this act several times, and Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's verse is typical:

> The floods of dissolution, the foaming oceans,
> bubbled over and covered the seven worlds.
> They swept over the eight directions,
> the encircling mountains, everywhere,
> and over the planets.

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The Lord kept all this
tucked inside the lower half of his belly
that day.

(*Periya Tirumoḻi* 4.4.9)

I have discussed this myth and its importance in the poetry of Nammāḻvār in Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 11.

44. Yocum, *Hymns to the Dancing Śiva*, 138.

45. Hardy has quoted one of these references: "Our Great One...who in the past ate up this whole world" (*Tvm* 7.9.7). Hardy recognizes that "such references...symbolize *in nucleo* one form of bhakti: meditation on the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa's mythical deeds." He continues, however, "but such specific usage [of myths] must not be mistaken for an integral function in relation to the 'story' as 'plot' level of the songs. In principle, they must be kept separate; as a rule they have been translated only when they appeared poignantly used" (*Viraha-bhakti*, 273–74).

This, I believe, is *not* the case in the example that Hardy has used: swallowing of the worlds. (See Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 11), and for other examples as well.

46. It is important to note that all ten incarnations are mentioned by the Āḻvārs. As late as 1970, K.C. Varadachari writes, "Of course there is no reference to Buddha or Kalki in the Āḻvār literature" (*Āḻvārs of South India*, 38). He is quite correct in pointing out that the Buddha is not seen as one of the ten incarnations, although there may be a hint of this in *Tvm* (5.10.4, line 1). Kalki is certainly included in the list, as we can see from the verses of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār and Periyāḻvār. Nammāḻvār also refers to Kalki in *Tvm* 5.1.10.

47. The Tamil Śaivite saint Māṇikkavācakar also composed *cāḻal* poems. Glenn Yocum (*Hymns to the Dancing Śiva*, 214) describes them as "consisting of a two-line challenge and a two-line response as the question and answer *cāḻal* game for girls; each verse ends with the exclamation *cāḻalō*."

48. Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, pp. 6, 273, 283, etc. This is all the more surprising because in his article "Ideology and Cultural Contexts of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Temple" he refers to Viṣṇu as the supreme deity in the temple worshipped by the Āḻvārs. I have discussed this aspect of Hardy's work in my article "Hindu Devotional Literature: The Tamil Connection."

49. The game is called *untipara* in Tamil and is also the theme of song fourteen of Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam*. See Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 395–98, and Yocum, *Hymns to the Dancing Śiva*, 215.

50. Nanda's son is Kṛṣṇa, and Kākutstha is Rāma.

51. See Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 75–78, and Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, part 3.

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52. R. Champakalakshmi, *Vaiṣṇava Iconography in the Tamil Country,* 44–45 and 116–18, and Mangala Murugesan, *Sangam Age,* 254.

Dr. Champakalakshmi notes that "inscriptional evidence...comes only from a record of about the seventh-eighth centuries A.D....the earliest sculptural representations belong to about the first half of the tenth century A.D. However, Rāma occupies a place of great honour in the hymns of the...Āḻvārs of the seventh-ninth centuries A.D." (*Vaiṣṇava Iconography,* 117).

53. See Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti,* part 3, and Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," passim. Zvelebil deals with this issue in "The Beginnings of *Bhakti* in South India," as do Edholm and Suneson in "The Seven Bulls and Kṛṣṇa's Marriage to Nīlā/NappiNNai."

54. *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 8–9; *Periya Tirumoḻi* 10.2–3.

55. Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 373–92.

56. On the basis of tradition and a striking similarity between the first, second, third, and *Nāṉmukaṉ Antātis,* we can say that there is some connection between Poykai, Pūtat, Pēy, and Tirumaḻicai Āḻvārs. At this point we have no reliable works on the early Āḻvārs except Norman Cutler's dissertation, which includes a study on Poykai, Pēy and Pūtat Āḻvārs.

The similarity between the first four Āḻvārs is a field that has to be studied. The first verses of Poykai, Pūtat and Pēy Āḻvārs' poems are similar in format and themes. I would like to point out one other striking instance: there is a repetition of two lines in Poykai Āḻvār's verse 99, Pēy Āḻvār's verse 40, and Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār's *Nāṉmukaṉ Tiruvantāti* verse 86. In all these cases, the first two lines of the verse are identical and the second two lines are different.

57. Poykai Āḻvār also refers to this incident:

> Can the immortals know him?
> Well, let that be;
> My good heart, even we can know
> the valor of him who counted on his feet
> all the heads of that wicked demon—
> the demon who bowed
> before the god
> who dwells on the lotus flower.
>
> (*Mutal Tiruvantāti* 45)

58. See Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar's interpretations of the relevant verses.

59. *The Splendor* (*Guru-paramparā-prabhāvam*), pp. 35–36.

60. *Periya Tirumoḻi* 10.2–3.

61. The refrain in this set of verses, as well as in the one immediately following, seems to indicate a kind of dance performed by people defeated in

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battle. The refrain here resembles the beating of drums, but the exact meaning is not known. The refrain is *taṭam poṅkatam poṅkō,* words that have no clear translation. The meaning is debated by modern theologians, who normally do not paraphrase the line. The word *poṅkō* may come from *poṅkutal,* which indicates "flourishing" and "overflowing," and so the captives may be wishing good fortune to the victors. This is very speculative. No other piece with this refrain is extant today, and hence I am unable to compare it with other works. I have translated it as "We beat our drums; we dance our surrender," using some of the ideas and meanings given by commentators.

62. "Long, red-gold hair" is the literal translation of the Tamil *cempoṉ nīḷ muṭi*. The word *muṭi* means "hair," but some commentators today take it to indicate a crown.

63. See Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 92–94.

64. Tamil poets have excelled in their compositions on the Lord in the form of a child. This genre of verses came to be called Piḷḷai Tamil, or Tamil [verses] on children. The deities who inspired these verses were Murukaṉ and Viṣṇu (as Rāma and more visibly as Kṛṣṇa), and later the goddess Mīnākṣī of Maturai. From the early songs of Periyāḻvār and other poets, later students of Tamil formulated several categories to describe the various types of verses. Not all of them are found in the works of the Āḻvārs. These categories were explained to me by C. Jagannathachariar in February 1977 with examples from verses on Murukaṉ. I have retained the order that Professor Jagannathachariar gave, though the order is different in Periyāḻvār's poems, but have replaced Murukaṉ references with references from the Āḻvār poetry in describing the categories:

Kāppu Paruvam. The protection of the child by calling upon deities and giving him special amulets. *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 2.8.1–11.

Ceṅkīrai Paruvam. The child cannot balance himself and sways like the tender shoot of the "red spinach" (*ceṉ kīrai*) plant. *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 1.5.1–11.

Tāl Paruvam. *Tāl* is literally "tongue," and the stage refers to the singing of lullabies. The verses end with the word *tālēlō,* a word without meaning. *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 1.3.1–10 and Kulacēkara's *Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi* 8.1–11.

Cappāṇi Paruvam. The stage when the child claps his hands in glee. The Tamil word *cappāṇi* seems to be an adaptation of the Sanskrit *saha-pāṇi*. *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 1.6.1–11 and Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār's *Periya Tirumoḻi* 10.5.1–10.

Muttam Paruvam. The child is invited to kiss the parent; not found in the Āḻvār poetry to the best of my knowledge.

Ampuli Paruvam. A favorite category among poets, for it is here that their literary skills are supposed to be displayed. The child points to the moon, and the parent asks it to come and play with the child. Professor Jagannathachariar

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pointed out four types of verses in this category: (a) *cama* (Sanskrit *sama*), where the equality of and the similarities between the moon and the child are highlighted; (b) *pēta* (Skt. *bheda*), where the differences between the moon and the child are stressed; (c) *tāṇam* (Skt. *dāna*), where the moon is told that the infant is really the supreme Lord and will reward it richly if it comes near him; and (d) *taṇṭam* (Skt. *daṇḍam*), where the poet warns the moon of dire consequences if it does not comply with the wishes of the divine child.

Ciṟu Paṟai. The child is given a little drum to beat. Not found in the Āḻvār hymns to the best of my knowledge.

Ciṟṟil Paruvam. The toddler comes to the place where little girls are playing and destroys their sand castles. No such verses addressed to the child are seen in the Āḻvār hymns, but Āṇṭāḷ uses this theme superficially from the viewpoint of "little cowherd girls playing in the streets" (*Nācciyār Tirumoḻi* 2.11). Āṇṭāḷ ends one hymn with the refrain "Do not destroy our little houses." The real erotic nature of these songs is made clear, however, by a giveaway line: "What will people say if you grab me and intertwine your body with mine?" (*Nācciyār Tirumoḻi* 2.9). Nammāḻvār also uses this theme with an erotic mood (*Tvm* 6.2.9).

Ciṟu Tēr. "The little chariot." The child drags a little chariot behind him. Not found in Āḻvār hymns.

Apart from these formal categories, Periyāḻvār glorifies several other stages of a child's life, and some of these have been noted in the text.

65. Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 86–87.

66. This line can also be read as "Those who see you give their minds unto you."

67. *Arcā:* "1. Worship, adoration. 2. An idol or image intended to be worshipped." Meanings taken from Apte's *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

68. A Tamil work by Piḷḷaip Perumāḷ Ayyaṅkār (date unknown) is titled *108 Tirupati Antāti* and glorifies the one hundred and eight sacred places. The most extensive discussion on this theme is found in Katherine Young, "Beloved Places (Ukantaruḷiṉanilaṅkaḷ): The Correlation of Topography and Theology in the Śrīvaiṣṇava Tradition of South India." See also Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, 256–61. Hardy has also discussed the milieu in which the temple functioned in "Ideology and Cultural Context of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Temple."

L.V. Gopalan's *Sri Vaishnava Divya Desams* gives a detailed list of all the places, with the Āḻvār songs consecrated at each place, description of the *arcā*, and instructions on how to get to the place. This is a useful travel guide.

Appendix 3 in *Nālāyira Tivviyap-pirapantam*, ed. K. Vēṅkaṭasāmi Reṭṭiyār and published by Tiruvēṅkaṭatāṉ Tirumaṉṟam, gives the names of eight different works composed on the 108 sacred places.

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69. Vēṅkaṭasāmi Reṭṭiyār, *Nālāyira Tivviyap-pirapantam*, Appendix 4, p. 183.

70. Ibid., Appendix 4, p. 200. L.V. Gopalan, however, gives the number as 245 (*Sri Vaishnava Divya Desams*, p. 3). G.T. Gopalakrishna Naidu (*Lord Venkateswara and Alwars*, p. 4) gives the number as 205.

71. A brief version of this legend is found in Gopalan, *Sri Vaishnava Divya Desams*, p. 1.

72. The most famous modern example of the morning "wake-up" prayers addressed to the deity is the *Suprabhātam* chanted at Tirumala-Tirupati. In recent years *Suprabhātams* have been composed for several other temples in South India.

73. See Ate, "Periyāḻvār's 'Tirumoḻi'," 392–95, for details on this "Tamil" myth. Śrī P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar has given a summary of 111 stories found in the Āḻvār songs as an appendix to his edition of the *Nālāyira Tivviyap-pirapantam*, but there is no record of "dancing with the pots" among these.

74. The connotations and history of the word *aṭaikkalam* are discussed by T.P. Meenakshisundaran in his article "Śaraṇāgati." *Aṭaikkalam* means "a deposit made and accepted for safekeeeping." The word is used occasionally by the Āḻvārs, for instance, in *Tiruccanta-viruttam* 92.

75. This is discussed in the chapter on Piḷḷāṉ.

76. This is a loose translation of the sentence, implying that the standard punishments in the realm of Yama, the god of death, are not adequate for the extensive sins committed by the Āḻvār.

77. For characters in Tamil *akam* poetry, see Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature* (1975), 98 n. 95. The list includes the hero, the heroine, her friend, the courtesan, the hero's friend, the heroine's mother and foster mother, and onlookers.

78. Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, passim.

79. All sets are located in a landscape involving Kṛṣṇa, except where noted; some songs are addressed to Krishna directly, others to Yaśodā or the other female cowherds:

Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi: 1.2 (verses 1–21; in some editions these may be two sets), 1.3–5, 1.8–9, 2.2–10, 3.1–4, 3.8, 3.10 (Hanumān to Sītā).

Periya Tirumoḻi: 10.2–3 (defeated *rākṣasas* of Laṅkā to Rāma), 10.4–5, 10.7–8.

Tiruvāymoḻi: 6.2, 9.9, 10.3.

Nācciyār Tirumoḻi: 2, 12–14.

Perumāḷ Tirumoḻi 6–7 (to Kṛṣṇa), 8–9 (to Rāma).

In these sets of songs the poet talks from the standpoint of a character closely associated with Kṛṣṇa or Rāma. There are several other sets where the poet speaks from the viewpoint of a character in Tamil Caṅkam poetry: a heroine,

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foster mother or friend of a heroine, etc. Some of these songs may possibly be connected with a mythic landscape involving Kṛṣṇa or Rāma. Other sets, like *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 3.5 and 3.6, are sustained meditations on particular incidents in the life of Kṛṣṇa—here, his lifting of the Govardhana Mountain and his playing the flute—but since there is no indication that the verses are spoken by a character associated with Kṛṣṇa, they are not included in the list above.

80. Tolaivillimaṅkalam, one of the 108 sacred places, is said to be just a mile away from Nammāḻvār's birthplace. The poet talks of the Lord sitting and standing there, and this, in fact, is true. There are two shrines in this place (though they are counted as one), and the *arcās* are in the standing and sitting postures. See L.V. Gopalan, *Sri Vaishnava Divya Desams*, 41.

81. See George Hart, *The Poems of Ancient Tamil*, 28–29.

82. Ramanujan, *The Interior Landscape*, 27.

83. *Nācciyār Tirumoḻi* 6.1–11. These songs are still sung at all Śrī Vaiṣṇava weddings.

84. There are similar passages in Yāmuna's *Jewel of Hymns* where Yāmuna surrenders to the Lord and then says that his soul has always belonged to him. These verses are interpreted in different ways by the later commentators Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai and Vedānta Deśika.

85. For a full account of this theme, see Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 11.

86. Tirumāliruñcōlai, one of the 108 sacred places.

87. The Tamil words being ambiguous, the line could read:

> Like red-hot iron sucking water,
> I drank you, my life, to exhaustion.

88. Today this *mantra* is given to the initiate at the time of *prapatti*. This entire phrase, *oṁ namo nārāyaṇāya*, has eight syllables, but the Āḻvārs tend to use the Tamil form *namō nāraṇa* in their poems.

89. The Tamil word I have translated as "outcaste" is *caṇṭāḷaṉ*.

90. In this connection see Ramanujan, *Hymns for the Drowning*, 146–50.

91. Thus Zvelebil, writing in 1975, dedicates his book *Tamil Literature* to all his friends and declares, "If I die and were to be reborn seven times, I shall still not forget their kind deeds."

92. For instance, *Periyāḻvār Tirumoḻi* 3.4.10, 3.5.11, 4.1.10, 4.4.7, 4.5.10, 4.9.6, 5.2.2.

93. Tamil: *aṟu camayam*. The word *camayam* is said to mean "religion," but Śrī Vaiṣṇava commentators interpret it as "sect" (within the orthodox Hindu tradition).

94. The Tamil word *tava* comes from Sanskrit *tapas*.

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Chapter Two

1. The traditional date is C.E. 916 or 918, but Neevel has argued against such an early date (*Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra*, 14–16). The date of Yāmuna is also discussed in Roque Mesquita's article "Yāmunamuni: Leben, Datierung und Werke."

2. The Lord of the temple is called Vīranārāyaṇa, but it is probable that the town and village acquired the name after a Coḷa ruler in the tenth century C.E. Walter Neevel writes that "there is strong epigraphical evidence that this area was developed and settled by Parāntaka I (907–955 C.E.), also called Vīranārāyaṇa Coḷa, who built a huge irrigation tank and established a Vīranārāyaṇa Agrahāra (Brāhmaṇa village), both named after himself." Neevel, *Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra*, 15.

Kāṭṭu Maṇṇārgudi is distinguished from Rāja Maṇṇārgudi or the "village of the *King* Kṛṣṇa."

3. This is also recorded in *The Splendor*, p. 120.

The priests deliberately use the vocabulary of drama to remind us that the Āḻvārs and *ācāryas* were devotees of "the Lord of the stage" (Sanskrit: Raṅganātha), who is enshrined at "the sacred stage" of Śrī-raṅgam.

4. For discussion on our knowledge about Nāthamuni, see "Nāthamuni as Reflected in Yāmuna's Works" (Appendix 1 in Neevel's *Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāñcarātra*) and R. Ramanujachari's article "Nathamuni: His Life and Times," in which he has collected the passages from Nāthamuni's works that are quoted by later preceptors.

5. *The Splendor*, p. 120. According to tradition, Nāthamuni was very learned in music and apparently refereed a music contest between two courtesans. The two women, one adept in "human music" and the other in "divine music" had previously performed in front of a king, at which time the one who knew "human music" was judged the winner. The other, piqued, went performing from temple to temple, hoping to win recognition and have her art vindicated. Finally, at Vīranārāyaṇapuram, Nāthamuni heard her and, delighted, gave her all temple honors. The musician proclaimed that she had finally met a connoisseur, and the king was intrigued enough to send for Nāthamuni. Nāthamuni saw in the occasion an opportunity to further the cause of *The Sacred Four Thousand* and enlighten the world about the "divine music" to which he had set the *Tiruvāymoḷi* and other works. He accepted the king's invitation and explained the intricacies of the rhythm to the king.

Published editions of *The Sacred Four Thousand* today usually include the names of the *rāgas* and the rhythms to which it should be sung, but these specifications are no more than (possibly) two hundred years old. In the last twenty years, selections from *The Sacred Four Thousand*, especially the songs of Periyāḻvār, have been "discovered" by performers who have sung and choreographed them.

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6. M. Parameswaran ("The Two-fold Vedānta of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism," 60–64) argues that verse 3 of *The Jewel*, which talks about *bhakti-yoga* descending through the words of Nāthamuni, actually refers to his discovery of the Āḻvār poems.

7. *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* verses 1 and 3, translated by van Buitenen in *Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā*, 179.

8. *Gs* 27, van Buitenen's translation.

9. *Gs* 29 and 31. I have followed van Buitenen's translation here with minor changes and have added the Sanskrit words in parentheses.

10. The term *nyāsa*, which Yāmuna has used, is synonymous with *prapatti*, according to the *Lakṣmī-tantra;* Deśika in the thirteenth century accepts this equation.

11. Translations of passages from *The Jewel* are my own.

12. *Gītā* 18.66 is known as the *carama-śloka*, or "last verse" (i.e., the final teaching), of the *Gītā*. It is commented upon extensively by later *ācāryas* and is also considered one of the three *rahasyas* or "secret teachings," of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

This *carama-śloka* of the *Gītā* is:

sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

"Abandoning all *dharmas*, fly to me for refuge. I shall rescue you from all sins; do not grieve."

The Śrī Vaiṣṇava community holds this verse to embody the main teaching of going to the Lord for refuge. Yāmuna clearly states in his *Gītārtha-saṅgraha* (22) that "the last lecture...concludes by stating the essential meaning of the book."

The first of these *rahasyas* is the "sacred eight syllables" (Tamil: *tiruveṭṭu eḻuttu*, Sanskrit: *aṣṭākṣara*), which we discussed briefly in the first chapter. The second *rahasya* is called the *dvaya* ("two," referring to the two lines that make up the *mantra*):

śrīman-nārāyaṇa-caraṇau śaraṇaṁ prapadye
śrīmate nārāyaṇāya namaḥ

"I take refuge in the twin feet of the auspicious Nārāyaṇa (or Nārāyaṇa and Śrī); I surrender (*namaḥ*) to Śrīman Nārāyaṇa."

13. As we shall see shortly, the reverse is not true: not all *prapannas* are capable of practising *bhakti-yoga*. While all those who practice *bhakti-yoga* are *prapannas*, not all *prapannas* are *bhakti-yogādhikārīs*.

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14. I have, following the traditional commentator Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai, construed the word *kula* as "clans," but wonder if it is not possible for the Āḻvār to be referring to the four families who have the authority to offer worship on behalf of the others. H. Daniel Smith says that in the *Śrī Praśna-saṁhitā* (chaps. 1 and 54), four *gotras* (which would fit the word *kula* as well) are said to best do *parārtha-pūjā* and can be called Bhaṭṭars (Smith, "A Typological Survey of Definitons," 115). The *Pāñcarātra* text may be quite late, but the Āḻvār and the text may be quoting a common tradition. Tirumaḻicai Āḻvār seems to be aware of the *Pāñcarātra* tradition, as we saw in the first chapter.

The Tamil word *kalai* is interpreted as meaning *Vedas* by the commentators; literally, the word means "art."

15. Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai and Vedānta Deśika differ in their interpretation of these verses. The former understands the verse as conveying Yāmuna's regret for his self-surrender, but Deśika believes that both the surrender and the realization of one's status as a *śeṣa* are important for *prapatti*.

16. On this theme, see my article "Reciprocal Gratitude: Divine and Human Acts of Thanksgiving."

17. In *Tvm* 2.1, the Āḻvār is longing for the Lord and believes that all nature shares "her" misery. In 2.2, there is a sustained meditation on the myth of the Lord swallowing the worlds and the image of the worlds being in the Lord's stomach, which I have argued elsewhere is a metaphor used by the poet to indicate union. See Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*, chap. 11.

18. In the thirteenth century both Naṭātūr Ammāḷ and Deśika carefully distinguish between *sādhana-bhakti* and *sādhya-bhakti* (*bhakti* as a way and *bhakti* as a goal), and on this basis they describe as *bhaktas* both those who practice *bhakti-yoga* and those who have surrendered themselves to the Lord.

19. See E. S. Varadaraja Aiyar, "Ancient Tamilian Warfare," 200.

20. With these lines the burden of salvation is cast on the Lord; Yāmuna says that he is only a burden to the Lord. Earlier, Nammāḻvār declared that God cannot consider him to be even that (*Tvm* 5.7.1).

21. Rāma, angered at a crow that hurt Sītā, discharged at it his powerful weapon, the *brahmāstra*, and finally forgave it only after it surrendered to him and sought his protection.

22. Periyāḻvār had referred to this episode earlier, in his *Tirumoḻi* (4.3.5). Śiśupāla, a cousin of Kṛṣṇa's, persisted in his insulting behavior, and Kṛṣṇa finally killed him.

23. These words, spoken by Rāma immediately after he accepted Vibhīṣaṇa's surrender, are known in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition as "the final [teaching] of the *Rāmāyaṇa*" (*rāmāyaṇa-carama-śloka*).

24. M.D. Narasimhachari, *Contribution of Yāmuna to Viśiṣṭādvaita*, p. 16.

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25. Vedānta Deśika (*Stotra-ratna-bhāṣyam*, p. 23) explains Yāmuna's adoration of Nāthamuni by stating that adoration of the Lord is tastier when one has adored one's teacher, just as milk, though naturally sweet, becomes sweeter when one adds sugar to it.

Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai and Deśika both use interesting similes to describe Yāmuna's initial reverential verses to Nāthamuni and his concluding verse. Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai compares the beginning and the concluding verses to the *praṇ ava* (*aum*), which is found at the beginning and end of the *Vedas*. Deśika, lyrically, compares the whole structure of the poem to a treasure casket encrusted with gems at its two ends; thus is *The Jewel* decorated with verses to the *ācārya* at the beginning and the end.

26. For example, *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.9.120. For a brief discussion on the early history of Śrī, see Kinsley, *Hindu Goddesses*, 19–22.

27. Neevel, *Yāmuna's Vedānta*, 197.

28. Periyāḻvār has also made the same point:

> My father, his father, his father, his father,
> and his father for seven generations
> have come and served you so well.
>
> (*Tiruppallāṇṭu* 5)

His daughter Āṇṭāḷ (Kōtai) frequently talks of herself as the daughter of Viṣṇucittaṉ (Periyāḻvār):

> Kōtai [daughter of] Viṣṇucittaṉ, king of the new town,
> ...composed this sweet Tamil garland.
>
> (*Nācciyār Tirumoḻi* 1.10)

29. The Tamil word *paṭṭar* is from the Sanskrit *bhaṭṭa*, and according to at least one (late?) *Pāñcarātra* text, these are the only people who can properly do *parārtha-pūjā*. I quote from Daniel Smith's article on *Pāñcarātra*, "A Typological Survey of Definitions," (p. 115): "This tradition [in *Śrī Praśna-saṁhitā*] holds that only four *gotras* are acceptable....The text claims that only those born in these families can best do *parārtha-pūjā*, and can be called Bhaṭṭars; others are mere *dīkṣitas*."

30. According to Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, Periyāḻvār (Viṣṇucittaṉ) found Āṇṭāḷ in his garden and adopted her.

31. The only two sets where she does not mention his name are 4 and 9. In 11.10 she also says that "Viṣṇucittar listens to the true words of the Lord at Tiruvaraṅkam ('the sacred stage')."

32. Neevel, *Yāmuna's Vedānta*, 197. The sources Neevel gives are Toṇṭaraṭipoḍi and Kulacēkara Āḻvār, as depicted in the translations of Varadachari's

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Āḻvārs of South India and Hooper's *Hymns of the Āḻvārs*. The selections from Kulacēkara in Hooper's version really emphasize the poet's disgust with people who think of this life alone as real—those who are slaves of passion, food, and a hedonistic life-style; women who tempt; etc. But Kulacēkara does not belittle a noble family or ancestors who were devotees. Toṇṭaraṭipoṭi Āḻvār does claim that he means nothing to his relatives, but he explicitly mentions as one of his "shortcomings" the fact that he does not come from a family of those who do *tapas* (*Tirumālai* 31).

33. In later Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature we see several instances where the author takes pride in a biological relationship with other devotees. Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, son of Rāmānuja's scribe and close associate Kūrattāḻvāṉ, praises his father in *Śrī-raṅgarāja-stava*.

34. Neevel, *Yāmuna's Vedānta,* 197.

M. Parameswaran, in "The Two-fold Vedānta of Śrī Vaisnavism," argues that Yāmuna only emphasizes his spiritual relationship with Nāthamuni. I believe that this is a simplification and that Yāmuna certainly calls attention to his biological relationship with his grandfather. As seen in the text, the Āḻvārs also consider biological heritage important.

35. See *Mahābhārata,* ed. van Buitenen, "The Book of the Assembly Hall," pp. 97–104.

36. Ibid., p. 101.

37. An incident quoted in the *Īṭu* commentary on the *Tvm* in the thirteenth century speaks about the importance of this biological relationship between Yāmuna (referred to in the passage as Āḷavantār) and Nāthamuni. The incident exaggerates the love that the Lord has for his *bhakta* and its extension to that devotee's descendants by indicating that the Lord even ignores his consorts when he can be close to his *bhakta*. I quote from the *Īṭu Thirty-six Thousand* commentary on *Tvm* 2.6.2:

> Even if the consorts think, "We have to check this intense love that he has for the Āḻvār," and embrace him with their voluptuous breasts [to make him forget the Āḻvār], he will still not glance at them. Here we quote the words that are said to have been told to Āḷavantār. Maṇakkāl Nampi said, "There is a secret at the sacred feet of Appaṉ" [i.e., there is something that only he knows]. Āḷavantār wanted to know this secret and graciously proceeded to Gaṅgaikoṇḍacōlapuram. Appaṉ was [immersed] in *yoga,* sitting on a little wall. [Āḷavantār,] thinking that he should not interrupt the meditation, stood behind the outer wall. Appaṉ emerged from his *yoga,* turned around, and asked, "Has anyone from the Coṭṭai clan [the clan that Nāthamuni belonged to] come here?" Āḷavantār replied, "I am here, your servant. But I was hidden behind [the wall]: How did you know I was there?" Appaṉ replied, "[The Lord and

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I] were 'experiencing' [union] together; Periya Pirāṭṭi [Śrī] embraced him closely, but the Lord of all did not even glance at her face; he pressed down my neck and peered out three or four times. Because he kept looking thus, I surmised that someone from the Coṭṭai clan had come."

Based on the notion of biological ties, Rāmānuja is traditionally said to have established seventy-four *siṁhāsanādhipatis*, or guardians of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava faith, and these preceptors and their descendants had a prestigious place in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. The descendants of the original appointees are honored even today on the basis of their physical ties with the original devotees.

38. H. Daniel Smith, *A Typological Survey of Definitions*, 114.

39. Ibid., 115.

40. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava hagiography *Āṛāyirappaṭi Guru-paramparā-prabhāvam* (*The Splendor*) records a story of Yāmuna being instructed to meet the teacher Kurukaikāvalappan at a particular time to learn the secret of practicing *yoga*. On the appointed day and time, however, Yāmuna was on a journey to visit the temple of Ananta Padmanābha at Tiruvanantapuram (modern Trivandrum) and missed his appointment. The teacher died soon thereafter and it is said that the secret of practicing *yoga* that is connected with the attainment of liberation was lost forever in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. *The Splendor*, pp. 136–37. See also Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 25.

41. Neevel, *Yāmuna's Vedānta*, 13–14.

Chapter Three

1. Sudarśana Sūri's *Śruta-prakāśikā* is a commentary on Rāmānuja's commentary on the *Brahma-/Vedānta-sūtras*.

2. These are his commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtras* (the *Śrī-bhāṣya*, *Vedānta-sāra*, and *Vedānta-dīpa*), the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and *Vedārtha-saṅgraha*. The other works of Rāmānuja, primarily devotional in texture, include *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, *Vaikuṇṭha-gadya* and *Śrīraṅga-gadya* (collectively referred to as the *Gadya-traya*), and a manual on worship called *Nitya-grantha*.

There have been several studies on Rāmānuja recently, and among these, John Carman's book pays attention to his relationship with his immediate disciples. Recent studies on Rāmānuja include Carman's *The Theology of Rāmānuja* (1974), Eric Lott's *God and the Universe in the Vedantic Theology of Rāmānuja* (1976), Robert Lester's *Rāmānuja on the Yoga* (1976), and Julius Lipner's *The Face of Truth* (1986). B. Gopal's epigraphical study, *Śrī Rāmānuja in Karnāṭaka*, deals with the *ācārya's* sojourn in the northern lands.

3. *Śrī-bhāṣya* 2.2.42–43. All quotations from the *Śrī-bhāṣya* are from the English translation by Thibaut. I have also used the Sanskrit edition of *Śrī-rāmānuja-granthamālā* (henceforth *Rgm*), edited by Śrī P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar.

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4. *Gītā-bhāṣya* (henceforth *Gb*), in Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar's *Rgm*, Introduction to chap. 7, p. 119.

5. *Śrī-bhāṣya* 1.1.1, in *Rgm*, p. 6, following Thibaut's translation, p. 14.

6. An earlier commentator whose opinions are preserved through fragmentary quotations.

7. *Śrī-bhāṣya* 1.1.1: *Rgm*, 6–7; Thibaut, 17.

On the important question of the Pūrva-mīmāṁsā and the ritual context of Rāmānuja's notions of sacrifice and action, see Francis X. Clooney, "Karma Defeats Karma: Sacrificial Reasoning and the Orthodox Response to the Problem of Karma and Rebirth."

8. *Gb* 9.14: *Rgm*, 139.

9. "Remainder, residue"; in Śrī Vaiṣṇava terminology, "an owned one, a vassal." See Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 156–57. The term *śeṣa* is also discussed in Francis X. Clooney, "Sacrifice and Spiritualization in the Christian and Hindu Traditions."

10. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* para. 243, tr. S.S. Raghavachar, pp. 186–87.

11. J.A.B. van Buitenen, *Rāmānuja on the Bhagavadgītā*, p. 21.

12. *Gb*, Introduction to chap. 10 and verse 10.2; *Rgm*, 146.

13. This and subsequent passages of *Gītā-bhāṣya* are adapted from M.R. Sampatkumaran's translation, *The Gitabhashya of Ramanuja*.

14. *Atimānuṣa-stava* 9, my translation.

15. *Kaivalya* is a kind of liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It literally means "isolation," thus indicating the isolation and detachment of the soul from matter. In Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology this is *not* the highest emancipation; communion with the Lord is presented as the highest state that a soul can reach.

16. Rāmānuja uses the words "freedom from old age and death" in *Gb* 7.8 and 7.29, which Śrī Sampatkumaran translates as *kaivalya* (p. 219).

17. Piḷḷāṉ, *The Six Thousand* 4.1.8–9, my translation.

18. *The Six Thousand* 5.1.3–9.

19. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* para. 126, tr. S.S. Raghavachar.

20. Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Piḷḷāṉ speak eloquently on the relationship between the devotee and the Lord and say that the Lord is *dependent* on the love of his devotee. This stance is seen very clearly in the Vaiṣṇavism of Assam, which glorifies the words of Kṛṣṇa: "I remain in the company of my devotees and do their bidding as if I were their slave" (Śaṅkaradeva, *Gopī-uddhave samvāda* 71, quoted by Audrey Hayley in "A Commensal Relationship with God: The Nature of the Offering in Assamese Vaishnavism," 112).

21. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* para. 128–29, tr. Raghavachar.

22. *Gb* in *Rgm*, 233.

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23. Robert Lester, "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism: The Concept of Prapatti or Śaraṇāgati."

In a later work, *Rāmānuja on the Yoga*, Dr. Lester questions the existence of five important aspects of Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology and worship in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, claiming that it is only from the thirteenth century that we have (a) *prapatti* as an *upāya;* (b) the secret teachings (*rahasyas*) regarding the three *mantras*, i.e., the *aṣṭākṣara*, the *dvaya*, and the *carama-śloka;* (c) Śrī, or Lakṣmī, as the *puruṣakara*, or mediatrix, between the soul and the Lord; (d) image worship in the temple; and (e) appeal to the authority of the *Pāñcarātra āgamas* and the hymns of the Āḻvārs. In my discussions on Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Piḷḷāṉ, I address these issues and give evidence to the contrary.

Julius Lipner seems to have accepted Professor Lester's arguments, but he does not advance any of his own. *The Face of Truth*, 116.

24. *Bhakti-yoga*, as discussed earlier, focuses on a steady meditation (*dhyāna*), while *śaraṇāgati* does not involve this disciplined meditation.

25. Lester, *Rāmānuja on the Yoga*. Dr. Lester says, "The chief characteristic of this *śaraṇāgati* is the repetition of a mantram avowing one's helplessness and trust in the Lord. And final release is guaranteed to the devotee solely on the basis of his having uttered such a mantram" (p. 272). Later, commenting on Rāmānuja's paraphrase of *Gītā* 18.62, he says, "There is no note here of the helplessness which characterizes the devotee of the *Gadya*" (p. 275).

26. H. Daniel Smith has recorded a film, *The Hindu Sacrament of Surrender*, on the ritual of *prapatti* as performed in the Teṅkalai Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.

27. "[The Lord,] with a view to enable his devotees to grasp the true meaning of the Vedas, himself composed the Pāñkarātra-śāstra....

"...[The] clause 'Of the whole Pāñkarātra, Nārāyaṇa himself is the promulgator' declares that Nārāyaṇa himself revealed the Pāñkarātra doctrine." *Śrī-bhāṣya*, tr. Thibaut, 527–29.

28. M.R. Sampatkumaran, in his translation of Rāmānuja's *Gītā-bhāṣya*, has noted (p. 193) that *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* 2.70, where the Lord's beauty is described as resembling (the radiance of) countless full moons and thus gratifying the universe, is echoed in Rāmānuja's comment on *Gītā* 6.47, where Rāmānuja paraphrases the Lord as saying, "I have made the entire world shine with my unbounded and unsurpassed glory and have gratified and satisfied the entire universe with my beauty."

Śrī Sampatkumaran has also noted that the "eight-limbed" prostration, or "prostration with eight organs," that Rāmānuja has mentioned in *Gītā-bhāṣya* 9.14 is also described in *Sāttvata-saṁhitā* (6.187).

29. See H. Daniel Smith, "The 'Three Gems' of the Pāñcarātra Canon: A Critical Appraisal," p. 46, and *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed*

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Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgamas, vol. 2, p. 52, note on *pañca-saṁskāra*. The annotations on *nyāsa* and *prapatti* on pp. 51 and 65 are also relevant.

30. Lester, "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism" (1966), 267 n. 3: "Rāmānuja relies very heavily on Yāmuna's ideas, especially with regard to the *Bhagavadgītā*."

31. S.R. Bhatt, in *Studies in Rāmānuja Vedānta*, 181, asserts that the Yāmuna who composed *The Jewel* is different from the Yāmuna who composed the philosophical works, but there is no convincing argument to this effect that I can see.

32. I here translate the relevant passage from *The Splendor:*

> Earlier, in the time of Uṭaiyavar [Rāmānuja], all the preceptors paid respect to Uṭaiyavar's spiritual son (*mānasa-putra*) Piḷḷāṉ and submitted their desire to him: "Please request Uṭaiyavar to comment on the works of the Āḻvārs so that the inner meaning is made manifest." When Uṭaiyavar was in a large assembly, Piḷḷāṉ bowed formally before him and with a prayerful attitude said, "I have a request to make." Uṭaiyavar graciously asked, "What is it?" and Piḷḷāṉ submitted, "You have graciously [composed] the *Śrī-bhāṣya*, and after a victorious expedition the philosophy (*darśana*) has been firmly established. Could you now comment on the *Tvm* and other divine works (*divya-prabandham*) of the Āḻvārs and thus protect them?" Uṭaiyavar thought about this and then commanded Piḷḷāṉ, "If we do a commentary on the 'graciously said words,' those of dull intellect may think that there is only this [limited] meaning. This is improper; the songs of the Āḻvārs will increase according to the understanding of each person. Therefore it may seem as if I have created a boundary for the 'graciously said words.' *You* do a commentary in the same manner [or in some way] on the *Tvm*." Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ, with the permission of the King of Ascetics, graciously wrote the first and foremost [*muntura muṉṉam;* also 'earliest'] commentary on the *Tvm*, the *Āṟāyirappaṭi* [*The Six Thousand Granthas*], like *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa*. Bhaṭṭar also graciously and correctly transmitted *The Six Thousand* to Nanjīyar, following Piḷḷāṉ.
>
> (*The Splendor*, p. 359)

33. Lester, "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism" (1981), 12.

34. Lester, "Rāmānuja and Śrī-Vaiṣṇavism" (1966), 279.

35. Ibid., 281. *Nitya-kaiṅkarya*, which is seen as "a distinct step beyond the experience of Bhagavān," seems to be the continuous service rendered by the devotee in a state that surpasses the constant visualization seen in *bhakti-yoga*.

36. Ibid., 280.

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37. Van Buitenen, *Rāmānuja's Vedārthasaṁgraha*, 32–33.

38. Early in the history of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, the question of whether this conversation was a real one seems to have risen. In Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai's commentary on the *Gadya-traya*, the following incident is retold. Empār was a cousin and contemporary of Rāmānuja.

> When Empār asked [Rāmānuja], "How are we to have confidence that the Lord himself has graciously vouchsafed these words?" Emperumāṉār [Rāmānuja] graciously replied, "The Lord has shown his attributes, such as gracious condescension, etc....If he had not willed it, the words could not have sprung through my mouth. Since the Lord has said these words, there is nothing against your having confidence in them."
>
> (*Gadya-traya-bhāṣya*, ed. S. Krishnasvāmi Aiyangār, p. 87)

39. Periyavācāṉ Piḷḷai, *Gadya-traya-bhāṣya*, ed. S. Krishnasvāmi Aiyangār, introduction to *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*, p. 3.

40. Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 235.

41. *Vedārtha-saṅgraha* para. 198, Raghavachar's translation; p. 37 of the *Vs* in *Rgm*.

42. In verses which later Śrī Vaiṣṇavas hold as exceedingly sacred, Viṣṇu promises protection to all who seek refuge in him or surrender themselves to him. These verses are believed to remove fear and doubt from the heart of the devotee:

> Giving up all *dharmas*, take refuge in me alone. I shall save you from all sins; do not grieve!
>
> (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

> Anyone who seeks refuge in me, saying "I am yours," is assured of my protection. This I swear.
>
> (*Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha-khaṇḍa* 18.33)

Chapter Four

1. These are the *para* (the supreme form), *vyūha* (with emanations of Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha), *vibhava* (incarnations as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and others), *antaryāmī/hārda* (the all-pervasive nature of the Lord, especially his presence in the heart of the devotee), and *arcā* (the worshipable form in the temple).

2. In *Vaikuṇṭha-stava* 1, Kūrattāḻvāṉ seeks the feet of Rāmānuja as a refuge, and this verse has become part of the daily meditations of every Śrī Vaiṣṇava devotee.

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3. Rāmānuja's birthday is traditionally celebrated between April 15 and May 15, when the moon is in conjunction with the constellation known in Tamil as Tiruvātarai (Sanskrit: Ārdrā). Interestingly enough, it is also the birthday of the *ācārya* Śaṅkara.

4. *The Splendor,* 239–40 and 255–57.

5. P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar, in his Introduction to the *Vaikuṇṭha-stava*, indicates the order in which he believes the five prayers were written: *Vaikuṇṭha-stava, Atimānuṣa-stava, Sundara-bāhu-stava, Varadarāja-stava,* and *Śrī-stava.* Of these, we can only know for sure that the *Sundara-bāhu-stava* was written at Tirumāliruñcōlai when Kūrattāḻvāṉ was separated from Rāmānuja. The hill and other surroundings are described in verses 2–5, etc., and verses 124, 129, and 130 indicate that Rāmānuja and Kūrattāḻvāṉ were separated. From the title and some descriptions, we might consider the *Varadarāja-stava* to have been written in Kāñcipuram, where the Lord is called Varada, or "he who grants desires."

6. See Appendix 4.

7. Deśika's summary, written in Sanskrit, is called *Dramiḍopaniṣat-tātparya-ratnāvalī,* and Maṇavāḷa Māmuṉi's Tamil verse summary, written in the *antāti* style, is called *Tiruvāymoḻi Nūṟṟantāti.*

8. This sentiment is also seen in *Śrī-stava* 5.

9. Several verses contain Kūrattāḻvāṉ's confession of lowliness. Apart from those quoted in the text, we may note the following:

> Even after destroying my sins, clarifying my thought (*buddhi*), throwing off the shackles of birth, and cultivating good qualities, I still will not be fit for reaching your feet, for I have been sinking in this existence for a long time.
>
> (*Vaikuṇṭha-stava* 85)

> Even after experiencing the difficulties of being in a womb, we have further troubles in this life after our birth. I am a fool who cannot redeem myself from them; I carry on commiting sins, which will surely result in more sorrow later.
>
> (*Vaikuṇṭha-stava* 92)

10. Commenting on *Tvm* 1.5.1, Piḷḷāṉ says:

> [Nammāḻvār says,] "I talk of his qualities in this manner because of my exceeding love (*sneha*), which is a sin (*pāpa*)." Why does he call this love (*prema*) a sin—that which is the greatest goal of a human being (*parama-puruṣārtha*) and whose object is the greatest person? It is because what generates sorrow is a sin, and causing harm to the Lord

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causes sorrow [to Nammāḻvār]. [The Āḻvār] considers his words on the Lord to be harmful, and since these sorrow-causing words arise from his love, he says that his very love is sinful.

11. In the thirteenth century, Piḷḷai Lōkācārya holds that *prapatti* is not an *upāya*. *Śrī Vacana-bhūṣaṇam, sūtras* 142–46.

12. The exact phrase is *śrīmantau hari-caraṇau* ("the feet of Hari with Śrī") and is a direct translation of a phrase from Nammāḻvār's *Tvm* 3.3.8: *tiru uṭai aṭikal*.

13. This phrase echoes Yāmuna and Rāmānuja. In *The Jewel* (verse 56) Yāmuna says, "Make me fit to be glanced at by those who, for a single vision of you, consider all enjoyment and liberation as mere straw." Rāmānuja, commenting on *Gītā* 18.54, describes the *bhakta* as "one who looks upon all objects in the world as mere straw."

14. This belief is reported by P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar in his introduction to the *Varadarāja-stava*, p. 1. *The Splendor* (pp. 246–47) says that Kūrattāḻvāṉ did this under the explicit order of Rāmānuja.

15. Kūrattāḻvāṉ alludes to several epic and Purāṇic incidents in which the Lord brought dead people back to life or reunited lost relatives with their dear ones. Since the Lord is steadfast and "constant," he has to fulfill the desires of Kūrattāḻvāṉ and Rāmānuja by uniting them.

16. In the *Varadarāja-stava*, verses 82–83, Kūrattāḻvān seeks refuge; in the verses immediately following these he talks about the importance of his "words of surrender." In verses 89–90 he submits his requests. In the *Sundarabāhu-stava*, he seeks refuge in verses 121–23 and submits his petition in verses 124 and 129.

17. Kūrattāḻvāṉ uses these exact terms, and as far as I know he is the first Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologian to use this Pāñcarātric terminology. Rāmānuja himself never used the term *arcā*, but the fact that Kūrattāḻvāṉ did implies that the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community had widely accepted Pāñcarātric notions by the eleventh or early twelfth century C.E.

18. *Gītā-bhāṣya* 9.2, translated and quoted by John Carman. For further discussion, see Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 192–93.

19. This concept is followed by Kūrattāḻvāṉ's son Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, who, in his commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, says that the Lord acts as if he does not see the sins of his devotees. This is significant, for there is no suggestion by these early *ācāryas* that the Lord enjoys the sins of his devotees, as some later Teṅkalai interpreters claim. Rather, the position of the early *ācāryas* is the same one followed by Deśika in his explanation of the word *vātsalya*, which appears in his commentary on Rāmānuja's *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*.

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Chapter Five

1. For a detailed study of Piḷḷāṉ's commentary on the *Tvm*, see Narayanan and Carman, *The Tamil Veda*.

2. This is believed to have been composed in the twelfth century. See K.K.A. Venkatachari, *The Maṇipravāḷa Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 61.

3. Kurukūr was the birthplace of Nammāḻvār.

4. *The Splendor*, p. 359.

5. See Chapter 3, note 32.

6. Piḷḷai Lōkācārya quotes Piḷḷāṉ in *Śrī Vacana-bhūṣaṇam*, *sūtra* 122.

7. On the Maṇipravāḷa literature of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, see Venkatachari, *The Maṇipravāḷa Literature*.

8. All translations from the *Six Thousand* commentary are mine. I have used S. Krishnamacharya's edition, and have cited in the text the numbers of *Tvm* verses on which Piḷḷāṉ commented.

9. One may recognize Rāmānujas's words in at least a part of Piḷḷāṉ's comment: *niratiśaya-sugandhamāy, niratiśaya-sukha-sparśamāy, niratisay-aujjvalamāy, nitya-siddhamāy asaṅkheya-māna divya-bhūṣaṇaṅkaḷālē*. Rāmānuja's words in the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* are almost identical: *nitya-niravadya-niratiśaya-sugandha-sukha-sparśa-niratiśayaujjvalya-...divya-bhūṣaṇa-* (*Śaraṇāgati-gadya* 5, pp. 241–42 in *Rgm*).

10. Piḷḷāṉ introduces *Tvm* 10.5 by saying, "This [set of verses] talks of *bhakti-yoga*" and he concludes 10.5.10, "Thus [the *Āḻvār*] concludes [the description of] *bhakti-yoga* that was begun [earlier]."

11. The Tamil word translated as "grow" is *virivatu*. It literally means "to expand, bloom, or blossom."

12. A hymn of benediction sung by Periyāḻvār.

13. Dennis Hudson, in a personal communication, pointed out that without the *aum*, the word *namaḥ* is the first word of the *mantra*, and as such its utterance implies the rest, even if unspoken.

14. This statement implies that since Garuḍa and Ananta (the serpent Śeṣa) are devoted servants of the Lord, the Lord will never abandon them. Similarly, he will not abandon any human being who is his devotee and servant.

15. Literally "The Big Sacred Feet," that is, the senior servant of the Lord. This name is used in Śrī Vaiṣṇava parlance to refer to Garuḍa, and the name "Little Sacred Feet" is given to Hanumān, the monkey messenger and paradigmatic servant of Rāma in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

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16. Piḷḷāṉ's statement to the effect that the Lord is his master "because of [the Lord's] qualities" is important to note. In the thirteenth century, Piḷḷai Lōkācārya voices another opinion, arguing that a *prapatti* precipitated by the knowledge of one's dependence on the Lord is *better* than a *prapatti* done because one is lost in the Lord's auspicious qualities.

17. *Rāmānuja on the Yoga*, xii.

18. *Rāmānuja on the Yoga*, 175.

19. Nanjīyar was converted by Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, the son of Kūrattāḻvāṉ, and though Nanjīyar was much older than Bhaṭṭar, he became Bhaṭṭar's disciple. The author of a commentary on the *Tvm*, Nanjīyar is considered an important Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*.

20. Lester also claims that the concept of Śrī, or Lakṣmī, as a mediator between the soul and the Lord becomes centrally characteristic of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community after the thirteenth century (*Rāmānuja on the Yoga*, xiii). Later he continues (p. 171):

> The *Gadya's* concept of Śrī, as mediatrix between the devotee and Nārāyaṇa,...represent[s] a clear evolution of theological concept beyond Rāmānuja's commentaries. Rāmānuja mentions Śrī and does say enough about her to warrant the general description given in the Gadya; but he nowhere indicates that she is to be the object of worship, much less that she is mediatrix between the devotee and Nārāyaṇa.

It is this claim that we refute in the text.

21. Lester, *Rāmānuja on the Yoga*, 171 and 175. Dr. Lester again argues that the *Śaraṇāgati-gadya* was not written by Rāmānuja. He also says (p. 175):

> The activity of a complete *śeṣa* is called *yajana*, but *yajana* is worship, not service, and such activity applies only to the state of bondage (*saṁsāra*). In his *Vedārthasaṁgraha* Rāmānuja does associate service with *śeṣatva*, devoting a lengthy section to establishing that service to the Supreme Soul is appropriate, on the ground that the individual soul is by essential nature *śeṣa* to the Supreme. This service (*sevā*, not *kaiṁkarya*), however, has the form of *bhakti* (*bhaktirūpā sevā*) and, again, applies only to the state of *saṁsāra*, not to the state of release. The concept of eternal service in release is natural for the *Gadya* with its emphasis on complete reliance upon grace. By the same reasoning, it is not a logical extension of Rāmānuja. Even if it were, we would expect Rāmānuja to introduce the idea in his major treatises.
>
> These conclusions are borne out by an examination of the commentaries to Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḻi*, the earliest of which are contemporary to Rāmānuja and the latest of which are contemporary to Pillai Lokacharya.

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We hope that it is sufficiently clear in this section on Piḷḷāṉ that the earliest commentaries on the *Tvm do*, in fact, speak about *nitya-kaiṅkarya* being the goal. This is accepted by Lester in a later work.

We have dealt with this verse at length to prove that three of the issues discussed in it by Piḷḷāṉ—*prapatti* as the *upāya* to reach the Lord, Śrī as the *puruṣakāra*, and *nitya-kaiṅkarya* as the goal—are matters that Dr. Lester sees as foreign to Rāmānuja's thought and present only in later commentaries on the *Tvm*. The conclusion he comes to is that these issues are characteristic of the thirteenth century, and since they are foreign to Rāmānuja and the eleventh century, the *Gadyas* were not written by him. It is obvious that this conclusion cannot be maintained in light of the evidence we have presented.

22. See Carman, *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 124–33.

23. For the verse and comment, see Appendix 5.

24. The last phrase is from *Tvm* 1.1.1; Piḷḷāṉ uses this phrase frequently in his commentary.

25. In this connection, see Carman's discussion on the divine attribute of *audarya*, or generosity, in *The Theology of Rāmānuja*, 192–94. Dr. Carman quotes Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, who writes that the goddess Śrī gives all she can to a devotee and then still thinks, "I have done nothing fitting for him."

Chapter Six

1. Empār was a cousin and disciple of Rāmānuja.

2. According to other accounts he is said to have lived for ninety-seven years or one hundred years. See A. Srinivasa Raghavan, *Sri Visnu Sahasranama with the Bhashya of Sri Parasara Bhattar*, p. ix.

3. Srinivasa Raghavan includes among the works of Bhaṭṭar another *stotra* on Raṅganātha called *Śrī Raṅganāthāṣṭakam*, as well as a work that has been known as the *Kaiśika Purāṇam*. See Srinivasa Raghavan, *Sri Visnu Sahasranama*, xii–xvii. The last two works are in Maṇipravāḷa.

4. For instance, in his *bhāṣya* on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, Bhaṭṭar comments:

> Yamuna also said concisely, "We praise you in form, qualities, etc." My father also says "We surely know that you are the supreme Lord through several Vedic texts."

Bhagavad-guṇa-darpanākhyaṁ śrī-viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-bhāṣyam, ed. P.B. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar, p. 29. This edition of the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-bhāṣya* is used throughout this chapter, and page numbers refer to it.

5. This verse typically illustrates Bhaṭṭar's style. The *maṅgala-sūtra* ("auspicious thread") is a symbol of marriage. Kūrattāḻvāṉ's works are com-

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pared to this thread, and Kūrattāḻvāṉ is seen as having presented this thread to the bride, the Sanskrit *Vedas*. The *Veda* is the bride, the works of Kūrattāḻvāṉ form the *maṅgala-sūtra*, and Viṣṇu/Nārāyaṇa—who is extolled in the hymns as the only Lord—is the bridegroom.

6. This is one of the first references in Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature to Rāmānuja's "ending" Kali-yuga. A sixteenth century (?) biographical work called *Caramopāya-nirṇayam* says that when Piḷḷāṉ heard *Tvm* 5.2.1, which speaks of the age of Kali ending, he became ecstatic because he thought it was a prophecy about the advent of Rāmānuja. See *Caramopāya-nirṇayam*, printed with *The Splendor*, 527–28.

7. *Vsb*, pp. 10–11.

8. *Vsb*, p 24.

9. Piḷḷai Lōkācārya, in the 13th century, says that *bhakti-yoga* is not in conformity with the essential nature of the human soul because it involves assertiveness. It is significant that there is no hint of this in Bhaṭṭar's writings, since he is considered the first successor to Rāmānuja by the later Teṅkalai sect of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas.

10. *Vsb*, pp. 26–27.

11. Āṇṭāḷ, in *Nācciyār Tirumoḻi* (1–5), uses the same simile:

> Like the sacred offerings that are to be
> offered to the divine ones in the sky
> by those skilled in the *Vedas*,
> but that are defiled
> by a fox straying from the forests
> into the sacrificial ground,
>
> My soft breasts, which are meant
> for the supreme one with the conch and the discus,
> [will be violated] if there is even talk
> that they are to be offered to human beings.
>
> O god of love,
> I shall die; you shall see.

12. One of the key differences in later centuries between the Vaṭakalai and Teṅkalai Śrī Vaiṣṇavas concerns the notion of pretext. The Vaṭakalai sect says that *prapatti* itself is a *pretext*, or *vyāja*, that the Lord uses to give salvation. Here Bhaṭṭar says that he *seeks* refuge/protection without any *vyāja*.

13. These words may also be translated as "I do not have the desire, qualification, strength, or repentance."

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14. *Vsb*, p. 151, on the name Sannyāsa-kṛt. When quoting Bhaṭṭar's comments on the names of Viṣṇu, I shall give the page number from Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar's edition and the name for which the comment occurs.

15. For an excellent depiction of the *pañca-saṁskāra* rites done in the Teṅkalai community, see the film *The Hindu Sacrament of Surrender,* made by H. Daniel Smith for Syracuse University.

16. Rāmānuja refers to this *mantra* in his *Śaraṇāgati-gadya*.

17. For a discussion on the *rahasya* literature, see Venkatachari, *The Maṇipravāḷa Literature of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryas*, 96–166.

18. See Venkatachari, pp. 106–7.

19. Bhaṭṭar's commentary on *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam* (verse 21), ed. Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar, p. 104.

20. *Anarghyo 'pi mūlyābhāsena svī-kartuṁ śakyaḥ*. *Vsb*, p. 187, comment on the name Sulabha. Bhaṭṭar illustrates this by quoting the story of a hunchbacked woman offering sandalwood paste to Kṛṣṇa and thus getting his grace.

21. See Chapter 2 and Appendix 1.

22. *Vsb*, pp. 202–3, on the names Jitamanyu, Caturasra, and Anādi.

23. For instance, among the names numbered 495–502 Hayagrīva is discussed, in the range 503–19 Rāma is discussed, and among 520–28, Kūrmāvatāra. These numbers refer to Aṇṇaṅgarācāriar's edition.

24. Bhaṭṭar discusses the story while commenting on names 912–45 (Śabdāsaha through Rucirāṅgada).

25. *Vsb*, p. 202, on Bhayāpa.

26. *Vsb*, p. 202, on Caturasra.

27. *Vsb*, p. 78, on Sarveśvara.

28. *Vsb*, p. 72, on Acyuta.

29. *Vsb*, p. 178, on Cala.

30. *Vsb*, p. 178, on Amānī.

31. *Vsb*, p. 25, on the verse starting *eṣa me sarva-dharmāṇām*. While in Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology the entire universe is seen to be the body of the Lord, the devotee is specifically mentioned as being his body, possibly because he recognizes his essential relationship with the Lord.

32. *Vsb*, p. 52, on Sambhava.

33. *Vsb*, p. 52, on Bhartā.

34. *Vsb*, p. 73, on Sammita.

35. *Vsb*, p. 178, on Bhakta-vatsala.

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36. This issue becomes important in later years during the Vaṭakalai-Teṅkalai split. The Vaṭakalai sect believes the Lord ignores the sins, and the Teṅkalai movement believes he "enjoys" them out of his grace.

37. Bhaṭṭar's quotation is from *Viṣṇu-dharma*.

38. *Vsb*, p. 201, on Puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtana.

39. *Vsb*, p. 201, on Śānta.

40. Some Tamil literature that associates *niratal* with a sexual union:

(a) *Cīvika Cintāmaṇi, Curamañcariyar ilampakam*, stanza 26.
(b) *Kanta Purāṇam, Vaḷḷi ammai tirumaṇa paṭalam*, verse 97.
(c) *Villibhāratam, Arjuna tīrta yātra carkam*, verse 22.
(d) *Ainkurunūru*, verse 71.

41. In this connection, see Dennis Hudson's article "Bathing in Krishna."

42. Bhaṭṭar's commentary on *Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam*, p. 105.

43. Ibid., p. 106.

44. Ibid., p. 106.

45. The latest edition and translation of the *Vsb*, by Professor A. Srinivasa Raghavan, was published by the Visishtadvaita Pracharini Sabha, which is essentially managed by Vaṭakalai Śrī Vaiṣṇavas.

Chapter Seven

1. Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-bhakti*, 8–10.

2. Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai, *Tiruppāvai Mūvāyiṟappaṭi*, p. 196.

3. The twenty ninth song of Āṇṭāḷ's *Tiruppāvai*.

4. Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai, *Tiruppāvai Mūvāyiṟappaṭi*, p. 202–3.

5. Kiṭāmpi Āccāṉ was a theologian and disciple of Rāmānuja. He was known as the "master of the sacred kitchen" (Tirumaṭapaḷḷi Āccāṉ) and supervised the preparation of the food served to his teacher. It nis reported in *The Splendor* that he was chosen for this task by Rāmānuja's *ācārya*, Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nampi, after Rāmānuja had been served poisoned food by a family. After this incident, Rāmānuja fasted; word of his fast reached Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nampi, who came to meet him. The fasting Rāmānuja bowed and paid his respects to his teacher by falling at his feet, and Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nampi deliberately did not say the formal words that permit the disciple to rise. The sight of Rāmānuja lying prostrate on the hot sand in front of Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nampi moved Kiṭāmpi Āccāṉ to rebuke his teacher's teacher, and this was of course an act of great disrespect. Kiṭāmpi Āccāṉ derided the rules of etiquette and formality that made a tired Rāmānuja exert himself thus and questioned the propriety of the *guru* who silently prolonged Rāmānuja's misery. Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nampi replied that

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he was testing the disciples to see who would find it unbearable to witness Rāmānuja's pain and be so bold as to question the senior teacher's conduct; he then charged Kiṭāmpi Āccāṉ with the task of guarding Rāmānuja's body and cooking for him. *The Splendor,* p. 203.

6. Vedānta Deśika, *Rahasya-traya-sāra,* ed. Rāmatēcikācāriyar Svāmi, vol. 2, p. 335.

7. The "festival image" of the Lord was being taken in a procession, and Rāmānuja wanted Āndhra Pūrṇa (Vaduga Nampi) to come out and worship; Āndhra Pūrṇa declined and gave the reply quoted in the text. *The Splendor,* p. 273.

8. Vedānta Deśika, *Rahasya-traya-sāra,* vol. 1, p. 103.

9. Vedānta Deśika believed that *prapatti* was the result of divine favor shown to one because of a good deed done in the past. Piḷḷai Lōkācārya believed that it was a good deed done accidentally (*yadṛcchā-sukṛtam*) that attracted divine grace.

10. I have discussed some of these issues in my doctoral dissertation, "The Śrīvaiṣṇava Understanding of *Bhakti* and *Prapatti:* The Āḻvārs to Vedānta Deśika."

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Glossary

A

Ācārya—A spiritual teacher or preceptor; the head of a spiritual lineage. Also an honorific title for several Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologians.
Adhikāra—Authority.
Advaita—"Non-dualism." The school of Vedānta founded by the teacher Śaṅkara in the eighth century C.E.
Akam—"Inner," referring to poems of romance and love. One of the two principal genres of Tamil classical poetry.
Ākiñcanya—"Being without anything." The state of being utterly destitute.
Āḷavantār—A name of the *ācārya* Yāmuna.
Āḻvār—"One who is immersed," the title given by Śrī Vaiṣṇavas to the twelve poet-saints of the 7th–10th centuries C.E. whose four thousand Tamil verses they acknowledge as the vernacular *Veda*.
Ananya-gatitva—Having no other refuge, sole resort.
Aṉpu—Love, affection.
Arcā—"That which can be worshiped." Viṣṇu enshrined in "image" form in Śrī Vaiṣṇava temples.
Arcāvatāra—"The descent as that which can be worshiped." One of the five forms of Viṣṇu in *Pāñcarātra* theology.
Āśraya—A place of refuge.
Āśrita—A devotee, a servant, one who has sought refuge.
Aṣṭākṣara—The "eight syllables." *See: Tirumantra*.
Aṭaikkalam—Trust, deposit, surrender.
Ātmā—Self; the individual soul.
Avatāra—A "descent" of Viṣṇu in an animal or human form.

B

Bhakta—A devotee who loves God or a spiritual teacher.
Bhakti—Devotion, love.
Bhakti-yoga—The discipline of devotional meditation, accompanied by *jñāna-yoga* and *karma-yoga*. It involves study of the Sanskrit *Vedas* and thus is open only to male members of the upper three classes. It is one of the two paths to salvation in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition, the other being *prapatti*.

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Bhara-nyāsa—"Transferring the burden" of one's salvation to the Lord. Held to be a synonym of *prapatti* by Vedānta Deśika in the thirteenth century.
Bhū—The Earth, a consort of Viṣṇu.
Brahmā—The god of creation, who was himself created by Viṣṇu. He is frequently depicted as abiding on a lotus flower that rises from Viṣṇu's navel.

C

Cāḻal, cāḻalē—A type of Tamil poem in the form of a verbal game played by girls. There is a two-line challenge and a two-line response, each verse ending with the phrase *cāḻalē*.
Camayam—Religion, sect.
Carama-śloka—The "last verse," *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66, regarded as one of the three "secrets" of Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature.

D

Dāsa—Servant.
Dayā—Mercy, compassion.
Deśika—*See:* Vedānta Deśika.
Dharma—Righteousness, duty, virtue, law, justice, the norms of social and ritual action. A central concept in the Hindu tradition.
Dhyāna—Meditation. Seen to be an equivalent of *bhakti-yoga*.
Divya-deśa—A "sacred place," any one of the 108 sacred temples sung about by the Āḻvārs.
Dvayam—The "two," a sacred formula of two lines extolling Viṣṇu and Śrī. Along with the *tirumantra* and the *carama-śloka*, one of the three "secrets" given to a Śrī Vaiṣṇava initiate at the time of surrender.

E

Emperumāṉār—"Our great one," an honorific title given to Rāmānuja.

G

Gadyas—Prose compositions, not metrical, yet framed with regard to harmony.
Gajendra—An elephant-devotee of Viṣṇu.
Garuḍa—Name of the "king of birds." The sacred bird on whom Viṣṇu rides.

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Govardhana—A mountain that was lifted by Kṛṣṇa to protect the cattle and cowherds from rain sent by Indra.
Guru—A religious teacher, spiritual preceptor.
Guru-paramparā-prabhāvam—"The Splendor of the Succession of Teachers." A thirteenth century (?) hagiography including stories of the Āḻvārs and early *ācāryas*.

H

Hanumān—A monkey-devotee of Rāma in the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* who is a paradigmatic servant of God.
Hārda—The presence of the deity in the heart of a devotee. One of the five manifestations of Viṣṇu in Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology.

J

Jñāna—Wisdom, knowledge.
Jñāna-yoga—The path of knowledge that accompanies *bhakti-yoga*.
Jñānī—The "wise one," referring in Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature to the person who seeks the Lord without expecting anything in return.

K

Kaiṅkarya—Loving service.
Kaivalya—"Isolation." In Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology, a form of self-realization which entails freedom from the cycle of life and death but is lesser than the ultimate goal of serving the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha.
Kākutstha—An epithet of kings of the solar dynasty; a name of Rāma.
Kali, Kali-yuga—The last and worst of the four "eons" in the Purāṇic concept of time.
Kalikaṉṟi—A name of Tirumaṅkai Āḻvār.
Kaṇṇaṉ, Kaṇṇā—"Dear one," the most frequently used name of Kṛṣṇa in Āḻvār poetry.
Karma—"Action, work," the law of retribution by which human beings (and sometimes animals as well) experience the consequences of their actions. It binds a human being to the cycle of life and death and can only be cut off by the grace of Śrī and Viṣṇu.
Karma-yoga—Ritual action and obligatory acts that pertain to one's class and station in life. One of the ancillaries to *bhakti-yoga*.
Karuṇā—Compassion, pity.

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Kīrtana—"Praise, glorification," especially by singing.
Kṛpā—Compassion, grace.
Kṛṣṇa—The ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu.
Kūrattāḻvāṉ—A close associate and scribe of Rāmānuja. The father of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar.
Kurukeśa—A name of Tirukkurukaippirāṉ Piḷḷāṉ.

L

Lakṣmī—"Fortune, prosperity," a name of Śrī, the consort of Viṣṇu.

M

Mahābhārata—An epic of about one hundred thousand verses, attributed to the sage Vyāsa but probably composed over several centuries.
Maṇavāḷa Māmuṇi—A fourteenth century theologian who is one of the most important teachers for the Teṅkalai Śrī Vaiṣṇavas.
Māṇikkavācakar—A ninth century devotee of Śiva, regarded as one of the most important Śaivite poet-saints. The author of *Tiruvācakam*.
Maṇipravāḷa—"Gems and corals," a hybrid language composed of Sanskrit and Tamil used by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.
Mantra—Sacred words or formulas on which one meditates.
Maṭal—A radical act, described in classical Tamil poetry, in which a man publicly declares his love for a girl by mounting a mock-horse made of palmyra leaves. This act usually forces the village elders to permit the young man to be united with his beloved.
Māyā—"Wonderful, astonishing." Occasionally, "deceitful."
Mokṣa—"Freedom, liberation" from the cycle of life and death.
Mūla-mantra—*See: Tirumantra*.
Mūrti—A "form, image, likeness" of the deity.

N

Naicyānusandhāna—Sustained meditation on one's lowliness.
Nālāyira Divya-prabandham—The sacred anthology of four thousand verses in Tamil composed by the twelve Āḻvārs.
Namaḥ—A word of adoration, middle term of the *tirumantra*. In the thirteenth century Vedānta Deśika saw it as a synonym of *prapatti*.
Nāma-saṅkīrtana—"Singing the names" of God.
Nammāḻvār—The most important Āḻvār. He wrote four poems, including the *Tiruvāymoḻi*.

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Namo nārāyaṇāya—*See: Tirumantra.*
Nappiṉṉai—A cowherd girl whom Kṛṣṇa married after subduing seven bulls.
Nārāyaṇa—One of the most frequently used names of Viṣṇu.
Naṭātūr Ammāḷ—A thirteenth century theologian whose views were elaborated by Vedānta Deśika.
Nāthamuni—The first Śrī Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* and the grandfather of Yāmuna. He is credited with collecting the four thousand verses of the Āḻvārs into an anthology and instituting their recitation in temple and home liturgies.
Nīḷā—A consort of Viṣṇu, sometimes identified with Nappiṉṉai.
Nitya-kaiṅkarya—Loving service that is rendered continuously and perpetually by a devotee.
Nyāsa—"Entrusting, depositing" oneself with the Lord. Used as a synonym of *prapatti*.

P

Pāñcarātra—"Five nights," a tantric tradition dedicated to Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa. Its texts are considered authoritative by the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas and its books of ritual were extremely influential in shaping the liturgy of Śrī Vaiṣṇava temples.
Pañca-saṁskāra—"Five sacraments," the initiation of a person into the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, which forms the ritual aspect of *prapatti*.
Pār Makaḷ—A Tamil name for Bhū, the Earth-goddess.
Para—"Supreme," Viṣṇu's manifestation in heaven.
Parāśara Bhaṭṭar—A twelfth century *ācārya* and protege of Rāmānuja who wrote a commentary on the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*.
Pattar—Tamil word for *bhakta*.
Patti—Tamil for *bhakti*.
Periyavāccāṉ Piḷḷai—A thirteenth century Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologian, author of several works, including a Maṇipravāḷa commentary on the entire four thousand verses of the Āḻvārs.
Piḷḷai Lōkācārya—A thirteenth century Śrī Vaiṣṇava theologian, considered to be one of the principal *ācāryas* of the Teṅkalai sect.
Piḷḷāṉ, Tirukkurukaippirāṉ—A cousin of Rāmānuja and author of the first commentary on Nammāḻvār's *Tiruvāymoḷi*.
Piṉṉai—*See:* Nappiṉṉai.
Prāpaka—Leading to, conveying; way.
Prāpya—That which is obtained or reached; goal.
Prasāda—"Clarity," divine favor or grace.
Puṟam—"Outer," referring to poems of war, heroism, and chivalry. One of two genres of classical Tamil poetry, the other being *akam*.
Purāṇa—"Ancient, old," the title given to well-known works that recount events believed to have taken place in ancient times.

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Puruṣakāra—A "mediator" between human beings and God. In Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology this usually refers to Śrī and the *ācāryas*, but it may occasionally refer to other gods as well.

R

Rāma—The seventh incarnation of Viṣṇu.
Rāmānuja—The eleventh century theologian who is considered to be the most important teacher of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. He wrote commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtra* and *Bhagavad-gītā*, three hymns, and several other works.
Rāmāyaṇa—"The Tale of Rāma," an epic attributed to Vālmīki.

S

Sacred Four Thousand—*See: Nālāyira Divya-prabandham*.
Sādhya-upāya—The way that has to be undertaken by a devotee or aspirant. The term refers to *bhakti-yoga*, or sometimes to *prapatti*.
Sampradāya—Tradition; traditional knowledge and practice that has been handed down through the generations.
Saṁsāra—The wheel of life and death to which one is bound by *karma*.
Śaraṇāgati—"Coming for refuge," seeking protection, surrendering oneself.
Śaraṇya—A refuge or protector.
Śaṭhāri—A name of Nammāḻvār. In Śrī Vaiṣṇava parlance, a silver crown kept in temples, which bears the feet of the Lord and is laid on devotees' heads after worship.
Śeṣa—(1) "Remainder," an owned one, slave; used in reference to the human soul. (2) A name of the serpent on whom Viṣṇu reclines in the Ocean of Milk. He is the paradigmatic servant.
Śeṣī—The "owner," referring to Viṣṇu.
Sevā—Service.
Siddha-upāya—The "ever-present or accomplished way," Viṣṇu's grace as primarily effecting salvation and as always present.
Sītā—The wife of Rāma.
Śiva—"Pure, auspicious." In Śrī Vaiṣṇava literature, a god who is a devotee of Viṣṇu.
Splendor—*See: Guru-paramparā-prabhāvam*.
Śrī—"Radiance, splendor, auspiciousness," the inseparable consort of Viṣṇu.
Śrī-raṅgam—The name of a sacred town near modern Tirucchirapalli. Its temple is the most celebrated in Śrī Vaiṣṇava history. Almost all the Āḻvārs sang in praise of Viṣṇu as Raṅganātha enshrined in this temple, and several *ācāryas* lived here.

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Śrī Vaiṣṇavas—The community that worships Viṣṇu and his consort Śrī, accepts the Tamil songs of the Āḻvārs as equivalent to the *Vedas*, and reveres Rāmānuja as its most important *ācārya*.
Stava—A hymn, panegyric.
Stotra—A hymn of praise.
Stotra-ratna—"Jewel among Hymns," a work composed by the teacher Yāmuna.

T

Tañcam—Support, refuge.
Tava neṟi—The "path of splendid austerities," understood to be *bhakti-yoga*.
Teṅkalai—One of the two Śrī Vaiṣṇava sects. The principal teachers it venerates are Piḷḷai Lōkācārya and Maṇavāḷa Māmuṉi.
Tiru—A Tamil name for Śrī.
Tiruvāymoḻi—The "sacred word of mouth, sacred *Veda*," a poem of Nammāḻvār which is the most important work in *The Sacred Four Thousand*.
Tiruveṭṭu eḻuttu—The "sacred eight letters." *See: Tirumantra*.

U

Ubhaya-vedānta—Dual Vedānta. Refers to the acceptance by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community of the two-fold heritage of the Tamil poems of the Āḻvārs and the Sanskrit scripture.
Upaniṣads—The last (and frequently considered the most important) part of the *Vedas*.
Upāya—The way or means to accomplish a task or secure a goal.
Upeya—That which is to be accomplished or attained, a goal.

V

Vaikhānasa—A branch of the Bhāgavata movement whose ritual is adopted in some Śrī Vaiṣṇava temples.
Vaikuṇṭha—The abode of Viṣṇu and residence for the soul who has attained liberation.
Vaiṣṇava—"Related to Viṣṇu," a devotee of Viṣṇu.
Vaṁśa—Family, dynasty.
Vaṭakalai—One of the two branches of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community. It venerates Vedānta Deśika (13th century) as an important teacher.
Vedānta—The "end of the *Vedas*," the school of theological interpretation principally based on the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and *Brahma-sūtra*.

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Vedānta Deśika—A thirteenth century theologian who differed from Piḷḷai Lōkācārya on the understanding of *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti*. He is considered as extremely important by the Vaṭakalai Śrī Vaiṣṇavas.
Vēḷvi—Sacrifice, ritual.
Vēṅkaṭam—A sacred hill in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It was sung about by the Āḻvārs and is an important pilgrimage center for Hindus even today.
Vibhīṣaṇa—The younger brother of Rāvaṇa who sought protection from Rāma in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. His surrender is held to be paradigmatic by the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.
Viṇai—"Action, deed." Used as a Tamil word for *karma*.
Viśiṣṭādvaita— "Qualified non-dualism," the philosophical name given to the form of *Vedānta* articulated by Rāmānuja.
Viṣṇu—The "all-pervasive" Lord, who is most important for the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community.
Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma—"The Thousand Names of Viṣṇu," a section from the epic *Mahābhārata* wherein Viṣṇu is adored. An important work in the piety and ritual life of the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas.
Vyāja—Pretext, semblance.
Vyūha—"Form, manifestation." In Śrī Vaiṣṇava theology (following the *Pāñcarātra* texts), the quadruple manifestation of Viṣṇu as Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. In iconography, portrayed as Viṣṇu reclining on the Ocean of Milk.

Y

Yāmuna—One of the most important *ācāryas* in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. The teacher of Rāmānuja's teachers.

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Tamil Pronunciation Guide

Vowels

Short:		Long	
a	(h*u*t)	ā	(f*a*ther)
i	(b*i*t)	ī	(magaz*i*ne)
u	(p*u*t)	ū	(r*u*de)
e	(th*e*y)	ē	(f*a*de)
		ai	(*ai*sle or d*ay*)
o	(*o*regano)	ō	(f*o*ld or f*o*rce)
		au	(n*ow*)

Consonants

I have followed the system of transliteration adopted by the *Tamil Lexicon*, with one exception: the letter *ṛ* is given as *r̲* in the *Lexicon*.

Tamil is very economical in its use of consonants, and unlike in Sanskrit the same letter may be pronounced in several ways. The letter transliterated as *k*, for instance, may be pronounced *k, g,* or *h,* depending on the position of the letter and also the geographic origin of the speaker. Thus *caṅkam* is pronounced *saṅgam,* and *vaṭakalai* is pronounced *vaḍagalai*. Pronunciation may often vary from standard usage according to the community or region a speaker comes from. The guide given below is only an introduction to Tamil consonants; there may be several exceptions to any of the given pronunciations.

k	(*k*ite, *g*ive, *h*ill)
ṅ	(so*ng*, a*n*chor)
c	(*ch*ain, *j*am, *s*ail)
ñ	(stau*n*ch)
ṭ	(*t*all, *d*oll)
ṇ	(*u*nder, wi*n*ter)
t	(closest equivalent is o*th*er)

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n (*n*ose)
p (*p*ain, *b*all)
m (*m*ail)
y (*y*ell)
r (*r*ail)
l (*l*ake)
v (*w*all)
ḻ (no English or Sanskrit equivalent)
ḷ (*fl*ake, c*l*ause)
ṛ (wo*rr*y, wi*tt*y)
(ṛṛ) (*tr*iumph)
(ṇṛ) (pa*ntr*y, fou*ndr*y)
ṉ (*an*alogy)

The following consonants are said to be borrowed from Sanskrit:

ś (*sh*oe)
ṣ (*sh*eep)
s (*s*ail)
h (*h*ot)
j (*j*ar)

Two Sanskrit compound consanants are used frequently:

kṣ (wi*cksh*ire, fi*ct*ion)
jñ (vi*gn*ette)

For more details see the "Note on Transliteration and Pronunciation" in Kamil Zvelebil's *The Smile of Murugan*.

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Sanskrit Pronunciation Guide

Vowels

Short:		Long:	
a	(h*u*t)	ā	(f*a*ther)
i	(b*i*t)	ī	(magaz*i*ne)
u	(p*u*t)	ū	(r*u*de)
ṛ	(*ri*ch)	ṝ	(*rea*ch)
ḷ	(*lree*t)		
		e	(pr*e*y)
		ai	(*ai*sle)
		o	(h*o*me)
		au	(n*ow*)

ṁ (a pure nasal, sounded as if the mouth were closed; or sounded as the *n* in the French word bo*n*)

ḥ (a subtle aspiration, usually at the end of a word; or, in that context at the end of a sentence or verse, pronounced as a reduplicated last syllable: thus final *aḥ* pronounced as *aha*, and final *iḥ* as *ihi*)

Consonants

Gutterals:					
k	(*k*ite)	kh	(Ec*kh*art)		
g	(*g*ate)	gh	(dig *h*ard)	ṅ	(so*n*g)
Palatals:					
c	(*ch*art)	ch	(mu*ch* *h*eat)		
j	(*j*oy)	jh	(he*dgeh*og)	ñ	(stau*n*ch)
Cerebrals:					
ṭ	(*t*ight)	ṭh	(light*th*earted)		
ḍ	(*d*ance)	ḍh	(roun*dh*eaded)	ṇ	(sta*n*d)

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Dentals:

t	(*)	th	(*)		
d	(*)	dh	(*)	n	(*)

*(sounds similar to the corresponding cerebral, but pronounced with the tip of the toungue placed where the teeth meet the palate)

Labials:

p	(*p*ower)	ph	(to*p*-*h*eavy)		
b	(*b*oy)	bh	(clu*bh*ouse)	m	(*m*other)

Semivowels:

y	(*y*ellow)	r	(*r*ipe)
l	(*l*and)	v	(*v*oice)

Sibilants:

ś	(*sh*eep)	ṣ	(*sh*oe)	s	(*s*ame)

h (*h*ot)

In most compound consonants, each consonant retains its original sound in combination with the others. The combination *jñ*, however, is usually pronounced as *gy* (do*g* *y*ard).

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